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## THESIS

THE SOVIET ANTI-SLOC  
DEBATE IN OPEN LITERATURE

by

Dean M. Whetstine

March 1985

Thesis Advisor:

R. B. Bathurst

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The Soviet Anti-SLOC Debate In Open Literature

by

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Lieutenant, United States Navy  
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

from the

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March 1985

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines and analyzes the Soviet anti-SLOC debate as it appears in open literature from the publication of Gorshkov's Sea Power of the State in late 1975 through the conclusion of the "Theory of the Navy Debate" in mid-1983. The thesis, with note taken of the Russian/Soviet cultural background, focuses on both Soviet historical assessments of the significance of anti-SLOC operations during World War II/The Great Patriotic War and of anti-SLOC operations considered as a modern problem of naval strategy and naval art. The anti-SLOC debate, in both its historical and modern context, reflected the priorities of Soviet military doctrine of the time and the planning uncertainties associated with transitional periods. The "Theory of the Navy" debate addressed, and may have resolved, critical issues of the unity of naval doctrine with Soviet military doctrine which were first raised in the anti-SLOC debate.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION -----	7
	A. THE TOPIC AND SCOPE OF DISCUSSION -----	7
	B. CULTURAL ASPECTS OF THE ANTI-SLOC DEBATE ---	9
II.	SEA POWER OF THE STATE -----	17
	A. COMMENTS ON METHODOLOGY -----	17
	B. THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR -----	18
	C. CURRENT SIGNIFICANCE -----	23
	D. SUMMARY -----	28
III.	THE ANTI-SLOC DEBATE 1976-1978 -----	31
	A. THE HEYDAY OF THE DEBATE -----	31
	B. 1976 PROGRESSIVES AND CONSERVATIVES -----	31
	C. 1977 CONSERVATIVE REACTION -----	40
	D. 1978 GORSHKOV RETRENCHMENT -----	47
IV.	THE ANTI-SLOC DEBATE 1979-1980 -----	58
	A. TRANSITION YEARS -----	58
	B. 1979 CONTINUED CONSERVATISM AND LULL -----	59
	C. 1980 THE LULL CONTINUES -----	67
V.	THE ANTI-SLOC DEBATE 1981-1983 -----	73
	A. TREND TO PROGRESSIVISM -----	73
	B. 1981 FIRST INDICATIONS -----	74
	C. 1982 THE PROGRESSIVES EMERGE -----	75
	D. 1983 THE FINAL WORD -----	78
VI.	THEORY OF THE NAVY DEBATE 1981-1983-----	84
VII.	SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS-----	97

END NOTES ----- 103

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. THE TOPIC AND SCOPE OF DISCUSSION

This thesis will examine the Soviet discussion in the open press of the issue of sea lines of communication (SLOC) interdiction. Its emphasis will be on "discovery" in a chronological framework--to examine the major Soviet military journals, draw from them what appear to be the significant contributions to the subject of anti-SLOC warfare in the order of their appearance, and through them to analyze the progress of the anti-SLOC debate. This study will be comparative only in the internal sense; for the sake of bounding the volume of relevant information, it will not incorporate Western commentary to a significant degree, or contrast the views of Western with Soviet writers on the problems of anti-SLOC warfare, but will focus solely upon the development of the discussion appearing in unclassified military journals as originated by Soviet writers.

In the West, the mission of SLOC protection has been a primary concern to naval strategists for years<sup>1</sup>. In the Soviet Union, the significance and conduct of anti-SLOC operations has likewise been a prominent topic among writers in military press, and it features what appears to be a considerable of disagreement among the various contributors. However, it is not easy to

discern the salient features of, and limitations on, the argument without some appreciation for the Soviet political-cultural environment. As noted by J. M. McConnell,

The Russians express themselves in print like no other people; without experience with their modes of discussion a Western reader will simply flounder... Moscow implies; the reader himself has to infer.<sup>2</sup>

A survey of Russian political culture as it relates to the anti-SLOC debate is undertaken in section B below.

The first text to be considered in this study will be S. G. Gorshkov's Sea Power of the State, which was first signed to press in November 1975. Follow-on sources will be almost exclusively articles taken from Soviet journals published subsequent to Sea Power of the State. The majority will be translated articles from Naval Digest and Military-Historical Journal. The last articles to be considered will be those of interest from what has become known as "The Theory of the Navy Debate". That discussion was conducted in Naval Digest during the years 1981-1983, and was concluded with a summarizing article by Admiral Gorshkov. The Theory of the Navy debate, as will be argued, appears to have its genesis in the anti-SLOC debate; thus this examination will commence with the single most comprehensive, authoritative, and prominent public exposition of

concepts of Soviet seapower available, will conclude with equally authoritative summary remarks (probably amounting to a statement of military doctrine), and will center attention on the more recent developments of the discussion, hopefully those of the greatest interest to the professional military audience, certainly those of most interest to the author.

#### B. CULTURAL ASPECTS OF THE ANTI-SLOC DEBATE

Russian political culture (as described by Keenan)--an amalgam of the peasantry, the bureaucracy, and the princely court--is "informal, corporate, conspiratorial, risk avoiding, guided by a pessimistic view of man and a sense of the nearness of chaos."<sup>3</sup> The continuity of these attributes was briefly interrupted during the first years of the Soviet regime, but subsequently reasserted itself, and they remain conspicuous aspects of Soviet culture in the modern era. Or, as stated by Keenan,

In the increasingly stable Soviet society of recent decades, a political culture based upon traditional assumptions and a deep commitment to stability and order has consolidated itself, both within the leadership and in Russian society at large.<sup>4</sup>

Russian/Soviet culture emphasizes the importance of outward unity in dealings with the outside world; the leading elites are careful to first, arrive at private corporate consensus in policy-making, and second, to

keep policy disagreements behind closed doors when dealing with the outer world. (The Marxist-Leninist precept of "democratic centralism" is particularly in consonance with the traditional Russian values in this regard). Explicit elite contention on policy issues remains a confidential matter.

This has implications for understanding something of the limits to legitimate contention on the anti-SLOC issue. Cultural values mandate that, by comparison to Western norms, homogeneity of opinion--cleaving to the collective policy--be a central tendency in public exposition. Disagreements in print will be muted or masked in Aesopian language.

To use a color metaphor, open discussion of a contentious issue in the Western military press--the role and future of large-deck aircraft carriers, for example<sup>5</sup>--could be said to feature bright polychromatic bands of distinct hues. On the large-deck carrier issue, for example, several distinct schools of thought have taken form over the past several years. The old guard has held staunchly to past conventional wisdom--that large nuclear-powered carriers are now and will continue to be the most survivable and effective general purpose instrument of the Navy for years to come. A second distinct school, made prominent by Senator Gary Hart, has argued for a "mini-carrier"

construction strategy. Still others maintain that cruise missile technology has made any large surface ship an expensive, vulnerable anachronism. The Soviet public debate on anti-SLOC warfare features no such distinct positions, but is made up of subtle monochromatic shadings. To an outside observer accustomed to easily-distinguished colors, there could appear to be scarcely any variation among different points of view at all. Our purpose here is to distinguish something of the varying shades of gray within the larger gray-hued field of the anti-SLOC debate--and variance among those shades of gray, particularly that developing over time, is not easy to discern. As McConnell notes,

Because the USSR does not explicitly repudiate its old views, because it superficially seems to be saying the same thing, with only slight changes in wording, one is left with the erroneous impression of continuity rather than change.<sup>6</sup>

As will become apparent, the Soviet anti-SLOC debate flows in two different, but closely related paths. One path is the continuing military-historical analysis of the Great Patriotic War, i.e. what was the significance of anti-SLOC operations during the war? The historical record and its assessment continue to comprise a very important element of the topic. The war record is a rich source of data about SLOCs, e.g. the Allied ship/tonnage losses from German submarine attacks in the



North Atlantic; it is also used in a more normative way, e.g. as an historical example of successful warfighting under the principles of Marxist-Leninist theory. As will be seen, Soviet commentary on the Great Patriotic War to some degree shifts in unison with changes in opinion about the modern importance of anti-SLOC warfare; Soviet commentary on historical matters dimly reflects the status of modern problems.

The second path of the debate examines the status of current problems of naval strategy. Technology, (particularly the "Revolution in Military Affairs") and social-political transformations in the modern era have brought about profound changes in naval operations, particularly those related to the advent of nuclear weapons, missile delivery systems, nuclear propulsion, and forms of troop control. But, quite significantly the resolution of modern problems frequently entails relating them to lessons of the Great Patriotic War. Two major patterns are to be seen among Soviet naval writers dealing with current problems: 1) to emphasize the significance of naval operations during the war, and carry that lesson forward to modern times, or, 2) to argue that postwar developments have brought about a state of affairs wherein the significance of naval operations--anti-SLOC in particular--has grown beyond

what it was during the war, when the major adversary was a continental power.

In any event, either technique--transposing the lessons of the past war to the present, or emphasizing the differences between the past and present--entails coming to grips with the experience of the Great Patriotic War. Several conventions shape Soviet historiography dealing with the war. Those of greatest concern here include:

1. The war was primarily a continental struggle; its outcome was determined by the outcome of the land campaigns.
2. The defeat of the Axis powers would have been impossible without the decisive defeat of the Wehrmacht on the Eastern front by the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union.
3. Although all the Soviet Armed Forces cooperated harmoniously in the national struggle, the Red Army bore the brunt of the battle, and was the primary instrument of victory.

The above canons tend to limit the possible reassessment of the influence of maritime factors on the outcome of the war. To magnify the importance of the war's naval campaigns (or anti-SLOC operations in particular) beyond the orthodox challenges the hierarchy of belief which accords the Red Army the foremost place in defeating fascism. By implication it diminishes the significance of the Red Army's land campaign; it also raises another troublesome issue, in that it would tend to enhance the importance of the war's major naval campaigns (such as the Battle for the Atlantic), most of

which were fought exclusively by the Western allies. Thus both the leading role of the Army among the Soviet Armed Forces and the leading role of the Soviet Union among the anti-fascist coalition would be modified.

Constraints on re-assessment of the historical record are one type of limit, but there is another to be considered as well--the limits which apply to the examination of current problems. In the vertical hierarchy of military thought, there comes a point at which a given topic is no longer discussable--that point being where, after an adequate amount of debate has been heard, a decision is made at a very senior level which in effect "settles" the issue<sup>7</sup>. In this regard, a few official definitions may be useful. From Sokolovsky's Soviet Military Thought,

Soviet Military Science studies the conditions for the preparation and conduct of war depending on the politics, socio-economic and other factors, the laws of armed struggle, and works out the methods and forms of warfare...<sup>8</sup>

And from the Soviet Military Encyclopedia,

Military Science...studies war as a complex socio-political phenomenon...armed conflict is the basic subject of its research...it is based upon Marxist-Leninist teachings and the experience of wars.<sup>9</sup>

Again from Soviet Military Thought, Military Doctrine is "an expression of the accepted views of a state regarding the problems of...war."<sup>10</sup> And, from the Soviet Military Encyclopedia,

Military Doctrine [is] a system of views adopted in a state for a given period of time on the objectives and character of a possible war. 11

In other words, Military Science is a continuing area of study, criticism, and discussion; it is the activity during which the principles of Military Doctrine are worked out, and is the result of a dialectical process, wherein antagonistic concepts are resolved. On the other hand, Military Doctrine is official state policy, and as such passes beyond the sphere of public discussion. Open journals are not the venue for critical assessment of such matters. The end of disputation on a particular issue probably indicates that the doctrinal decision has been made.

The texts to be considered then, in examining the anti-SLOC debate, will be products of a culture which values group cohesion and the appearance of external unity. Observance of this precept in the analysis of an issue on which there is differing opinion will result in its public discussion in masked forms and language not analogous to that composing Western debates. Orderliness is important, as is strict discipline in recognizing and preserving orthodoxy, both in historical analysis and in matters of current concern. Official acts of repudiation or recantation of past "errors" are extremely rare, as is criticism of superior members of established hierarchies. Public disputation of a given

issue is allowed, (at times even encouraged), prior to its official resolution, but is strictly enjoined thereafter.



## II. SEA POWER OF THE STATE

### A. COMMENTS ON METHODOLOGY

The text to be considered in this chapter, Sea Power of the State by S. G. Gorshkov, as noted above, is an apt starting point for reasons of comprehensiveness and authority. Sea Power of the State combines an interpretative review of modern Soviet naval history, particularly that of the Great Patriotic War, and a discussion of current problems of naval theory. This book will be assessed under the two topics of: The significance of anti-SLOC warfare during the Great Patriotic War, (abbreviated to simply "The Great Patriotic War") and the significance of anti-SLOC warfare in the current day, (abbreviated to "Current Significance").

The process of assembling what in ordinary terms would be considered a unified presentation of Gorshkov's anti-SLOC commentary entails the winnowing out and combining of widely separated sentences, paragraphs, and sections, some of which are redundant. Some passages are seemingly explicit, others more obscure and inferential. It is difficult to account for the "dispersion" of the anti-SLOC argument. Superficially it would almost appear to be no more nor less than inattentive editing; however, two speculative

possibilities suggest themselves. One is that the book is in part a compendium of individually written articles originally intended for separate publication; the second is that, by spacing out different components of his anti-SLOC argument, Gorshkov would make it less comprehensible and hence possibly controversial to the non-Navy readership--the most likely source of disagreement. He would nonetheless communicate his message to those with the interest and patience to seek it out--the attentive Navy audience.

#### B. THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

Gorshkov made clear in his introduction that the role of the Soviet Army in winning victory was decisive. Naval actions contributed to the outcome of the war but did not determine it.

...the struggle in the sea and ocean theaters was a struggle in secondary sectors whose influence on the course of the war as a whole, although considerable, was not decisive.<sup>12</sup>

The above excerpt is an ostensible example of leading off a possibly disputatious thesis with a conciliatory gesture: The Army was the most important. However, as will be seen, Gorshkov made relatively light of the Navy's support-the-flank mission during the war.

According to Gorshkov, the Navy's contribution to the war's outcome consisted of two different types of missions: 1). Supporting the flanks of the army, which

was the most important in the early days of the war<sup>13</sup>, (a significant limitation--implying that the mission was less important later), and 2). War at sea operations, including the conduct of operations against enemy SLOCs. The order in which Gorshkov listed the two missions in one passage suggests an emphasis on the Navy's importance as a unique instrument, with capabilities and potential extending beyond the coastal flanks of the army:

Thus, the Soviet Navy had to simultaneously accomplish two groups of missions during the war. First, we had to wage war at sea with a strong enemy who was stubbornly trying to seize the initiative and to destroy our Navy. Second, our Navy was supposed to stabilize the strategic flanks of the front and assist the ground forces on the defensive and the offensive...this was the only correct approach...our Navy showed itself to be an active and powerful force, capable of dramatically changing the situation on the sea and in the coastal zone...<sup>14</sup>

The "war at sea" mission was listed ahead of the "assist the ground forces" mission--suggesting a priority or ordering of importance, and the capabilities of the navy were likewise demonstrated first "on the sea", and second "in the coastal zone". Neither, it should be noted, are what the Ground Forces perspective would probably mandate. As in the introduction, Gorshkov reiterated traditional orthodox Navy subordination (here to the need to fulfill the support-the-flank mission): "this was the only correct approach". Yet, given the statement which preceded it,

the declaration appears incongruous, and more ritualistic than sincere.

Operations at sea had a "marked influence" on the course of the war, and anti-SLOC operations were the most important naval activities; the battle for the Atlantic SLOCs in particular was of "strategic significance."<sup>15</sup>(i.e., it had a direct influence on the outcome of the war). In the Atlantic, German commerce raiding operations failed to strangle England, but only because the German High Command did not build or deploy adequate numbers of submarines early in the war, did not support them adequately with air reconnaissance, and took no measures to protect their submarines from Allied ASW forces.<sup>16</sup> With the commencement of Plan Barbarossa, the German diversion of naval forces to the Eastern Front made it impossible for them to strangle England. With the invasion,

...the German submarines [in the North Atlantic] were left to their own resources...The war against lines of communications which linked [the USSR] with the Allies heated up with great intensity.<sup>17</sup>

The Soviet Navy also contributed to the victory of the Western allies in the battle for the Atlantic.

Through strikes against bases, sea lines of communication, and enemy ships [the Soviet Navy] made sizeable contribution in the battles with enemy fleets...during the most desperate period of the "Battle for the Atlantic," about 20% of the total [German submarine force] were in action on the Black, Baltic, or Barents sea. The enemy air force [in

Russia] was greatly reinforced during periods of bitter fighting...18

Gorshkov's characterization of the relationship between Soviet Navy operations and the Battle for the Atlantic emphasized an indirect influence of the former on the latter; by his assessment, the Soviet Navy garnered a measure of credit for the failure of the German anti-SLOC campaign.

Soviet anti-SLOC operations against the Germans also had a "substantial effect on the combat capability of the enemy forces."<sup>19</sup> Gorshkov made repeated references to heavy German shipping losses from Soviet attacks; however, only one German defeat--that of Rommel in North Africa--was "predestined" by the success of anti-SLOC warfare, this by the British efforts in the Mediterranean.<sup>20</sup>

It is uncertain why Gorshkov calls Rommel's defeat in North Africa "predestined" by anti-SLOC action; however, one possibility is that because the Afrika Corps was a very small German contingent (by Eastern Front standards) and was defeated in the course of relatively distant and unimportant campaign (from the Soviet perspective), that any Soviet commentary would be less bound by the canons of Great Patriotic War historiography noted in Chapter I. Moreover, the Red Army was never involved in the North African



campaign--hence it would be no diminution of its status to ascribe Rommel's defeat to naval action.

In the case of Great Britain, a nation whose capacity "not only to continue the war but to survive"<sup>21</sup> depended upon maintaining SLOCs, the role of the navy (as protector of SLOCs) was critical to its survival, according to Gorshkov. For the duration of the war, the Western allies were forced to allocate major resources to SLOC-protection operations.

In the Pacific, an oceanic theater, naval operations had a more substantial effect on the course of the campaign than was the case in the Atlantic. The two main naval belligerents--Japan and the United States--each conducted quite different SLOC-related operations. Japan devoted almost no attention to either SLOC attack or defense, choosing instead to commit its submarines to operations against naval combatants. The lack of balance in the forces and missions of the Japanese navy, in particular its failure to provide for SLOC defense, was one of the reasons for its defeat.<sup>22</sup> By contrast, the U.S. gradually built a balanced naval force and devoted considerable attention to attacking merchant shipping, mostly by means of submarines, which were also quite effective against Japanese naval forces. Thus Japan's military and economic strength was substantially reduced, while that of the U.S. grew

unimpeded.<sup>23</sup> (Gorshkov cleaves to the official Soviet view, though, in noting that Japan's capitulation was brought about only by the Soviet Army's victory over the Kwangtung Army in Manchuria).

It will be seen in future articles that a central issue in the process of the anti-SLOC debate will be the problem of identifying, first in historical and then in theoretical terms, the influence of anti-SLOC operations on the course of the continental campaign. Recitation of tonnage losses due to anti-SLOC actions were a prominent element of Gorshkov's presentation, and would continue to be a preferred argument in future discussions. The effects of those losses, however, and the best strategy for optimizing the effects of losses, were not developed at this early stage of the discussion.

#### C. CURRENT SIGNIFICANCE

According to Gorshkov, the postwar evolution of the international system has resulted in a situation in which the Soviet Union faces a different threat than was the case during the war, a threat not merely from a strong continental power.

Today...we are threatened by a coalition of sea powers, which along with land armies, air forces, and missile troops also have powerful modern naval forces at their disposal.

The role of combat in the ocean sectors...has increased greatly and under certain conditions these sectors could become the main sectors.<sup>24</sup>

Here, as noted above, Gorshkov implicitly identified the limits of applicability of lessons of the Great Patriotic War. Whereas Nazi Germany was a continental power which could only be defeated in a continental campaign, future enemies are sea powers, wherein naval combat operations will take on a new significance.

In Chapter One, Gorshkov discussed in some detail the modern importance of ocean commerce, particularly to the economies of the developed nations of the West. The routes along which sea traffic is routed are vital, in both military and economic terms, particularly in the Atlantic.

The role of the Atlantic lines of communications is increasing due to the exceptional military importance of the theater...The main NATO communications routes are of enormous military importance...The main transport arteries of the Western countries run across the Atlantic Ocean, and their economies depend greatly upon the uninterrupted functioning of these arteries.<sup>25</sup>

The Pacific and Indian Ocean basins received less attention, but the economic and military roles of SLOCs are noted in those areas as well.

Gorshkov's approach to assessing the current significance of SLOCs was to note the transformation in the potential military-economic significance of anti-SLOC since the war--to implicitly compare the vulnerabilities

of today's adversaries with yesterday's allies. England was almost defeated by the flawed German anti-SLOC campaign--and the Atlantic SLOCs are more vital now than they were then. Gorshkov does not categorically assert that the ocean theaters will be more important than they have been, but that they "could" be; the conditions under which SLOCs will become of main importance seems to be closely related with a scenario wherein the economic power of the adversaries are brought to bear--i.e., probably in an extended war scenario.

Modern naval forces, submarines and aircraft in particular, have important capabilities in anti-SLOC operations. In the modern era, naval aircraft have been relieved of their traditional primary mission of attacking fixed targets;

Today they can direct their main efforts against strike forces of surface ships, and submarines and transports, including those with troops and cargo in transit or in port.<sup>26</sup>

The above passage, while discussing capabilities rather than missions, does imply that anti-SLOC operations would be part of the "main efforts" of naval aviation.

In another section, nuclear-powered submarines with cruise missiles and naval missile-armed aircraft were specifically included with ballistic missile submarines as occupying the "leading position" among naval forces

due to their importance in conducting strategic missions against the military-economic potential of the enemy<sup>27</sup>. (The wording of the passage is ambiguous; an alternate interpretation is that Gorshkov is referring to submarine and naval air units with coastal-attack capabilities).

Under modern conditions, said Gorshkov, the main goal of the Navy is to support missions related to operations against enemy land targets and to protect against strikes from the sea.<sup>28</sup> Naval combat operations were divided into categories of "Fleet Against Fleet" and "Fleet Against the Shore"; the former was characterized as "involving the destruction of enemy ships at sea and in bases and the battle for sea and ocean communications (interdiction and defense)."<sup>29</sup> The latter included such activities as amphibious assaults, naval gunfire, air strikes by naval aircraft, and missile strikes from submarines. Due to the security and striking power of modern nuclear missile-armed submarines, the importance of "Fleet Against the Shore" operations is increasing, and so too is the role of those "Fleet Against Fleet" operations which are associated with the goals of "Fleet Against the Shore" operations.<sup>30</sup>

the significance of...such traditional missions as interdicting the sea communications of the enemy... has changed. These operations are now a most



important integral part of naval efforts aimed at undermining the military-economic potential of the enemy...The traditional fleet-against-fleet operations, which since ancient times have been characteristic of the battle for sea communications...are being employed today in a new, decisive area--in naval actions against the shore.<sup>31</sup>

The above passage occurred in a segment devoted to discussing the capability of nuclear-missile armed submarines to strike the enemy's vital military-economic targets from the sea. The category of operations against the shore included activities related to attacking the military-economic potential of the enemy; anti-SLOC operations, it would appear, were being subsumed under that category, and hence with "the main goal of the Navy". And,

operations of naval forces aimed at crushing the military-economic potential of the enemy...can have a direct influence on the course and even the outcome of a war.<sup>32</sup>

The above passage clearly links nuclear-missile strikes from SSBNs to operations aimed at crushing the military-economic potential of the enemy; if anti-SLOC operations are also included in that category, as it appears they are, then it would follow that Gorshkov is arguing, in a somewhat circuitous fashion, that anti-SLOC "can have a direct influence on the course and even the outcome of a war".

According to Gorshkov, the most important consequence of establishing control of the sea is that

it permits the victor to conduct followup operations of his own choosing in the affected area; his first example of such a followup action was that of blockading the enemy's ports, bases, and coastal sectors (an important type of anti-SLOC action). In the past, loss of sea control could mean losing the war if one side was highly dependent upon sea communications. A citation from a nineteenth-century Russian naval textbook further reinforces the traditional correctness of this view.<sup>33</sup>

SLOCs were vital to the U.S. in its conduct of the Vietnam War. Blockades were enforced against both the revolutionary forces in the south and the DRV, and uninterrupted sea transport was central to sustaining the U.S. war effort.

Military sea transport in local wars has played a highly important and at times decisive role...Ocean and sea shipments were also of very great importance in the Vietnam war.<sup>34</sup>

The final reference to SLOCs in Sea Power of the State is found in the first of the author's conclusions, which says

In examining the change in missions being prosecuted by navies from an historical point of view, we cannot fail to note that the "oldest" of them, which retains its importance even under present-day conditions, is the battle against sea communications...<sup>35</sup>

#### D. SUMMARY

Gorshkov's message in Sea Power of the State sustained, with careful qualifications, the traditional

orthodox view of who won the Great Patriotic War (the Army) and why (because Germany was a continental power). Most significant, however, were his evaluations of the overall importance of the Navy's support-the-flanks mission, and what lessons ought to be derived from the record of World War II as a whole. Support for the flanks was most important during the early days of the war. As the fighting on the eastern front progressed, the importance of the more oceanic missions overshadowed that of coastal operations; anti-SLOC operations, the "principal type" of operation, had a "substantial" effect on the course of the fighting. In the oceanic theaters, where nations dependent on SLOCs were engaged, anti-SLOC operations had "strategic significance", and defeat or victory was directly related to the outcome of the anti-SLOC campaign. The outcome of the anti-SLOC campaign was due as much to German failures as it was to Allied successes.

Gorshkov's assessment of the modern situation strongly implies basic continuities between the situations faced by the Western alliance then and now. In the modern age, the NATO alliance finds itself in a situation similar, but ominously more vulnerable than that which many of its members faced during World War II; SLOCs are militarily and economically more vital than ever, the Soviet Union has learned from the

mistakes of the German anti-SLOC campaign, and the capabilities of modern anti-SLOC weapons are vastly greater than was the case during World War II. The Navy's capability to deliver crushing strikes against the shore has greatly expanded and become increasingly important, not only in terms of nuclear-missile weapons, but also in terms of operations in a new, decisive area--anti-SLOC operations--which have now become part of the main mission of the Navy. Postwar history bears out the lesson that SLOCs continue to be vital in the conduct of imperialist wars. The transformation of affairs since World War II has not diminished the importance of anti-SLOC operations, but rather, has increased them.

### III. THE ANTI-SLOC DEBATE 1976-1978

#### A. THE HEYDAY OF THE DEBATE

In terms of sheer numbers of articles, the years 1976 through 1978 are the heyday of the anti-SLOC debate within the period covered by this thesis. During this three-year period, the average number of articles dealing with either wartime anti-SLOC operations or current anti-SLOC operations is more than twice that found in subsequent years. Central issues which came to characterize major points of view within the debate would surface--representatives of what will be called the "progressive" and "conservative" positions will come forth; the dichotomy between those who argued for an oceanic anti-SLOC campaign of and coastal blockade anti-SLOC would become apparent. Radical revisions in Gorshkov's assessment of anti-SLOC would appear, and two hallmark articles by Vice Admiral Stalbo would set the stage for a comprehensive review of the whole status and method of justification for the anti-SLOC mission.

#### B. 1976 PROGRESSIVES AND CONSERVATIVES

During the year 1976, something appeared of the divisions which separate various factions of the anti-SLOC debate. Those who will be assigned the ascription "progressive" within the context of this topic tend to make statements which emphasize the

importance of the Soviet Navy's anti-SLOC mission during the war, the successes rather than the failures of the German anti-SLOC campaign, the growing economic and military dependence of NATO upon SLOCs, and the voiced concerns of the NATO military leadership for their security. The "conservative" camp, on the other hand, tends to emphasize the Navy's support-the-flanks mission during the war and carefully qualifies the importance of anti-SLOC warfare both during the war and in the modern era. In general it could be said that the "conservative" view probably comes closer to a Ground Forces point of view on the uses and potential of naval forces.

In January 1976, Captain 1st Rank Vorov'yev cited the important contribution of surface ships in anti-SLOC operations against German forces:

Interference with the sea communications of the enemy was one of the most important missions of the Soviet Navy. The main role in its accomplishment was played by aircraft and submarines...this mission was assigned regularly [only] to motor torpedo boats and [even] occasionally [only] to patrol craft, minesweepers, and destroyers...The destroyers of the Black Sea Fleet were the most active on communications, carrying out 36 sorties with mission assignments to search out and destroy convoys at sea and to shell ports.<sup>36</sup>

Vorov'yev also maintained that the experiences of the Great Patriotic War continue to be relevant in assessing the capabilities of modern surface combatants.

Thus, the experience of the Great Patriotic War testifies to the multi-faceted activity of surface combatant ships. They found extensive employment for gunfire support of the Ground Forces, in



counter-[shore] battery fire, for putting amphibious landings ashore in defense of our own sea communications, and for interference with the sea communications of the enemy...The experience of the combat employment of surface ships in the years of the Great Patriotic War has not lost its relevance even for our times.<sup>37</sup>

Vorov'yev ranked the wartime anti-SLOC operations as "one of the most important," but not the "principal type" of naval activity, as did Gorshkov--a subtle downgrading. He also ranks the support-the-flanks mission ahead of anti-SLOC in the context of surface ship employment. The principal contributions of surface craft were in mission areas other than anti-SLOC operations (which is listed in last place); the pre-eminence of aircraft and submarines in anti-SLOC is acknowledged. Vorov'yev may be making a restrained bid to propose the continued valuable contribution of surface warships in a major mission area which has been largely assigned to other naval branches.

Vorov'yev's major thesis--that surface ships had significant contributions to make in anti-SLOC operations--never reappears in the anti-SLOC debate. The absence of subsequent repetition or approving reference suggests that his point of view found no adherents, and that submarine and air forces continued to be regarded as the virtually exclusive weapons of anti-SLOC operations.

In the April 1976 issue of Naval Digest, Fleet Admiral Lobov reviewed the recently published Seapower of the State. Though his remarks did not specifically address the SLOC-related points raised by Gorshkov, one passage in particular implies shared appreciation for the importance of SLOCs during the war, though in this case the subject is Soviet SLOCs:

The work of the Commander in Chief of the Navy points to the great contributions of the crews of the merchant ships in the pursuit of victory, where in many cases the sea lines of communications were the main and sometimes the only routes for delivering military supplies.<sup>38</sup>

In the next issue of Naval Digest, Captains 1st Rank Morozov and Krivinsky also used the experience of the Great Patriotic War to relate anti-SLOC actions to the outcome of war on the continental theaters. The interest of their article bears out a considerable excerpt:

...of considerable interest is study of the experience of the Second World War in warfare on sea communications and the possibilities of employing it under contemporary conditions...The disruption of maritime communications, which often were the only way of getting supplies and support to the Ground Forces, exerted considerable influence on the course of combat operations on the land fronts, and also damaged the economy of the opposing states...Today the growing combat capabilities of our Navy...make it feasible to assign more decisive aims to warfare on communications...A study of the experience of warfare on oceanic and sea communications in the years of the Second World War with account taken of the changes in the composition and armament of navies during the postwar period would facilitate a deeper and more correct resolution of the questions of naval art under modern circumstances.<sup>39</sup>

Morozov and Krivinsky used language very similar to that employed by Gorshkov; e.g., anti-SLOC operations exerted a "considerable influence" on the course of combat operations on the ground fronts; anti-SLOC warfare under modern conditions can be of more "decisive" significance. Of most interest, however, is their final statement--implying that the lessons of the naval actions of the Great Patriotic War have yet to be correctly incorporated into current views on naval art, i.e., that the importance of anti-SLOC operations is not yet fully appreciated. In Soviet parlance, to publicly announce that a "more correct resolution" of a particular issue is called for amounts to criticism of a degree rarely encountered; the authors appear to be saying that the lessons of the Great Patriotic War and the models of action drawn therefrom may be exerting too great an influence on the resolution of modern problems of naval art.

The anti-SLOC issue was to surface briefly once again in 1976 above Gorshkov's signature in the article entitled "Navy" in the current edition of the Soviet Military Encyclopedia.<sup>40</sup> The Navy CINC listed the capabilities of the modern navy, placing anti-SLOC operations behind strategic nuclear strikes and attacks against naval forces, but ahead of aid to the ground forces, amphibious operations, and transportation.

The official character of the Soviet Military Encyclopedia suggests the conclusion that there was wide agreement that in modern times, anti-SLOC operations were of greater importance than support-the-flanks operations.

Several subsequent articles ranked Great Patriotic War anti-SLOC operations second in significance behind support-for-the-army type missions. For instance, an editorial written in Communist of the Armed Forces for Navy Day stated

In the Great Patriotic War...the Navy secured the stability of the strategic seaward flanks of the huge front, reliably inflicted powerful strikes on enemy communications, defended our own merchant shipping, and cooperated closely with the other services of the Armed Forces.<sup>41</sup>

An editorial of almost exactly the same wording appeared the same month (July) in Naval Digest<sup>42</sup>; the timing and near-identity in wording appearing in two major armed forces journals suggests that both pieces could have been originated by a single higher authority. Military press articles published for Navy Day emphasize, among other topics, traditional interpretations of the Great Patriotic War and themes of the unity of the Armed Forces with each other and with the Communist Party and the Soviet People. Historical interpretations presented in major journals during this time can be taken as reliable indicators of prevailing

orthodox opinion. It would appear that some themes expressed by Gorshkov himself in Sea Power of the State are somewhat contrary to the canons of military history, particularly those which impute a greater importance to the Soviet Navy's wartime anti-SLOC operations than to its support-the-flanks operations. Moreover, the Morozov-Krivinsky article, which may have been inspired by Sea Power of the State, had gone even further by implying that current military science was deficient in its evaluation of the significance of anti-SLOC operations.

An article by Fleet Admiral Smirnov in Red Star of late July also expressed a somewhat unconventional assessment of the importance of wartime Soviet Navy anti-SLOC, which he lists third behind anti-naval and support-the-flanks operations.<sup>43</sup> The same month, Rear Admiral Stalbo noted the importance of SLOCs to the effective prosecution of the local wars of aggression so often engendered by the United States:

Sea shipments had especially great importance in the wars in Korea and Vietnam. . . The dependence of military operations on functioning of sea shipments is apparent.<sup>44</sup>

Stalbo's observation, which echoes a similar remark by Gorshkov in Sea Power of the State, indicates not only that postwar history is being scrutinized for lessons applicable to modern war, but that SLOCs, and by



implication anti-SLOC warfare, are vital to more than one type of war.

In August, Karpov noted, and documented extensively, the increasing economic importance of world ocean shipping. His study, a good example of a type frequently found in Naval Digest, concentrates on the flow of goods between the industrialized nations of the West and their trading partners (the North Atlantic routes in particular) and the growing importance of oil transshipment routes. In worldwide terms, there has been a "sharp rise in the strategic significance of the merchant fleet."<sup>45</sup> The frequency and regularity of articles in Naval Digest which concentrate on the volume and pattern of world oceanic shipping would seem to be a telling indicator of the always-current interest among the editors and audience of being aware of the importance of SLOCs to much of the rest of the world.

If arguments for an increased appreciation of the strategic value of anti-SLOC operations (such as those of Morozov-Krivinsky) could be described as "progressive", then Admiral Sysoyev's December article was an expression of a "conservative" position. According to Sysoyev, the importance of sea blockade has grown with the advance of weapons technology and the increase in oceanic trade; however, to accord a primary strategic role to naval forces generally and blockading



actions in particular he dismissed as a "bourgeois error" associated with Mahan and Colomb--thus strongly admonishing the "progressive" camp for basic theoretical errors in analyzing problems of naval art.

According to Sysoyev, the experience of the Second World War bears out the proposition that sea blockade does "facilitate substantially" the achievement of the larger tasks confronting the armed forces as a whole. Blockade is best employed

when the forces and means for the prompt destruction of the adversary is lacking...and above all to undermine the military-economic capacity of a country and to deprive it of freedom of action in specified regions of the ocean (seas)...it cannot be excluded that in the future [anti-SLOC warfare] may occupy an important place in warfare at sea and take the form of blockade or counter-blockade as it did in the Second World War.<sup>46</sup>

Sysoyev's conservative position eschewed the Navy-separatist style which had crept into the SLOC discussion to date. He emphasized the continued relevance of the lessons of the Great Patriotic War, rather than the transformations which have taken place since then. Anti-SLOC operations "facilitate" broader goals rather than take on individual "strategic significance." The ascription of excessive importance to the role of the Navy was denounced in ideological terms--successful operations are the result of cooperation among all the Armed Forces.

The conditions wherein anti-SLOC operations will be most important were carefully limited (to an extended-war scenario); its future significance commensurate with that of the Great Patriotic War is possible, according to Sysoyev, but is by no means certain. The propositions for anti-SLOC operations were associated with past communal triumphs, and did not challenge the role and status of the Ground Forces by criticism of traditional beliefs.

#### C. 1977 CONSERVATIVE REACTION

Two major characteristics of the anti-SLOC debate to appear during 1977 suggest General Staff level skepticism about the importance currently being accorded to anti-SLOC operations by the "progressive" faction:

- 1) The Stalbo articles, discussed immediately below, which call for a thorough military-historical investigation into the influence of anti-SLOC on the ground campaign; and
- 2) Gorshkov's retreat from the high-priority status which he had previously accorded to anti-SLOC warfare in Sea Power of the State and during his several articles in 1976. The Stalbo articles, and the subsequent compliance shown them, demonstrated a real dearth of justification for the anti-SLOC mission within the context of current strategy; the Gorshkov retreat demonstrated high level (General Staff)

opposition to the Navy's advocacy. (No lower authority would be compelling).

The first and probably the most significant contributions for the year came from Vice Admiral Stalbo in the February and March issues of Naval Digest. In them, he explicated the difficult and complex problems of naval history, and admonished the audience to be alert for new formulations which could be arrived at through creative use of naval theory and the historical record. For instance, according to Stalbo, the results of intensive research demonstrate that, in terms of distribution of ship losses, coastal anti-SLOC operations are more effective than those conducted on the high seas:

In the course of one research study to determine... the areas of losses of German ships, [it was determined that] the Hitlerites suffered practically all their losses in a narrow coastal belt...in another study about losses in all ocean theaters it was established that even there the Americans, English, Japanese, and Germans also suffered their main losses in coastal areas.<sup>47</sup>

According to Stalbo, considerable work has been done in the historical study of navies in the Great Patriotic War, but increased study of the relationship between anti-SLOC operations and its effect on operations on the ground front is necessary.

Research in this area up to the present time has been limited to tactics, their effectiveness, to determination of the total tonnage destroyed per year, for periods of a war, or by theaters. Yet, not one of

these works has considered the influence of warfare on sea communications...on the ground front...it is necessary to determine in what manner damaging an adversary at sea affects the combat capabilities of his armed forces.<sup>48</sup>

An adequate study of the necessary issues will defer resolution of the place of anti-SLOC warfare for some time to come:

Accomplishment of [these] tasks in the area of naval history [will] require many years of intensive work by a considerable number of scholars. For this, new directions in research must be taken which have no prototypes as yet. Among them are the influence of warfare on sea and oceanic communications on combat action on the land. <sup>49</sup>

Stalbo's articles were both an admonishment to anti-SLOC "progressives" and a gesture of conciliation to the probably numerous and powerful adherents of the traditional "conservative" position. According to Stalbo, the "progressives" had further work to do; current levels of research and theory were inadequate. Tonnage figures were inadequate justification for anti-SLOC campaigns; it was necessary to clearly demonstrate what influence merchant tonnage losses had on the course of the ground campaign, which remains the decisive arena.

As will become clear in Chapter V, the pair of articles outlined above parallel in form and content the pair of articles which were published almost five years later. In April and May of 1981, Stalbo would again call for an analytical effort, this time to elucidate

the relationship between a Theory of the Navy and military science as a whole. In 1977, Stalbo defined and set a new approach to the evaluation of the significance of anti-SLOC warfare. In 1981, he would define and set a new approach to evaluating the position and relationship of the Navy relative to the rest of the Armed Forces.

Three months later, in June, Red Star carried an article by Captain 1st Rank V'yunenko which credited coastal artillery with valuable contributions to inshore anti-SLOC and blockading operations during the war. "Although warfare on enemy communications was not a main assignment...it cost the enemy enormous losses."<sup>50</sup> V'yunenko's thesis follows in the train of, and is rendered more plausible by, Stalbo's evaluation of coastal anti-SLOC noted above.

V'yunenko reappeared in September with an article which, in examining joint naval and ground force operations during the Great Patriotic War, took account of the practical consequences of the Soviet anti-SLOC campaign in a way which demonstrated the influence of Stalbo's recent dictum:

Destruction of transport prevented the enemy from committing tens of thousands of soldiers to battle and deprived him of fuel, ammunition, and rations...thanks to this, dozens of divisions, thousands of tanks, guns, and aircraft, and hundreds and thousands of tons of ammunition...could not be used by the enemy.<sup>51</sup>



V'yunenko's approach takes the line proposed by Stalbo above: To analyze the anti-SLOC issue in terms of its contribution to operations on the ground front. The ethos--harmonious cooperation, and the goal--the achievement of strategic victory on the continental front, remain the same; but the type of naval operation which best support it lies further to seaward than has been traditionally believed.

Admiral Gorshkov reentered the discussion in July. In his hardcover book The Navy, the following list appears in a paragraph devoted to discussion of "the strategic and operational missions" of the modern Navy:

- (1) Hit the important ground objectives of an adversary;
- (2) Destroy his forces at sea and at their bases;
- (3) Support the ground forces, mainly with amphibious landings and by cutting off the amphibious landings of the adversary;
- (4) Interfere with the oceanic and sea communications of an enemy;
- (5) Protect one's own [sea lines of communications].<sup>52</sup>

The low ranking accorded to anti-SLOC is noteworthy for several reasons. Firstly, it is quite at variance with the importance he accorded to it in Sea Power of the State, and with that he accorded to it as recently as July 1976. In comparing his July 1976 entry in the Soviet Military Encyclopedia with the citation above, it should be distinguished that the earlier quote is in reference to the Navy's capabilities, the later quote to



its missions. The first two items on the list are the same in each source; however, anti-SLOC is listed third as a capability in the Encyclopedia, and fourth (behind amphibious operations) as a mission in The Navy. The difference in anti-SLOC ranking for the two categories is not clear, but could be a way for Gorshkov to communicate a point of view that there was presently an asymmetry between current Navy capabilities and current Navy mission assignments--that the Navy had a powerful anti-SLOC capability which was not being accorded proper priority in military strategy. He does, however, reiterate the scheme of subsuming anti-SLOC to the undermining of the military-economic potential of the enemy, and thus retains it as part of "the main mission of a modern navy" as had been set forth earlier in Sea Power of the State.<sup>53</sup>

Why, though, would Navy capabilities to conduct anti-SLOC be unduly restrained by the General Staff planners? One possibility is that suggested by the earlier appearance of the February-March Stalbo articles--that the "conservative" Ground Forces-dominated General Staff was not convinced that anti-SLOC operations were as important an element in current strategy as many Navy "progressives" were--hence the need for Navy writers to fully develop the relationship

between anti-SLOC operations and combat on the ground fronts.

Gorshkov addressed the anti-SLOC issue twice more in print before the year was out. In October in Military-Historical Journal he reviewed the Navy's operations during the war. "The first and main group [of missions] included...assistance to the...Red Army which was carrying the main burden of the war."<sup>54</sup> Again, his listing of Navy wartime missions is anomalous by comparison to earlier formulations; anti-SLOC is listed behind operations against German naval combatants and aircraft, and surface ship raids against German ports and bases, but listed ahead of SLOC defense, flank support against the German navy, and blockade of German forces pinned to the seacoast. In the November Naval Digest, he emphasized that, during the war, naval operations were carefully coordinated with the requirements of the main theater. During the first phase of the war (prior to the German defeat at Stalingrad), support of the army's flanks was paramount; during the second phase, the Navy's role expanded to include other significant missions, including anti-SLOC; (that aspect at least is consistent with the view he put forth in Sea Power of the State). Throughout the war,

...missions were dictated by requirements of the armed conflicts at the fronts...the use of the navy's forces was determined by the need for coordination...

primarily in the interest of routing the main enemy forces on land.<sup>55</sup>

In the modern age, with the development of an oceanic missile navy, enemy SLOCs would be endangered worldwide.

Gone into oblivion are the hopes of strategists across the seas and elsewhere that...their sea communications and shores would be inaccessible to our strikes.<sup>56</sup>

If anything was certain in the Gorshkov articles about the priority status of anti-SLOC operations, historical or modern, it was that they communicated varied messages over a short period of time, and that the messages in general summed to the conclusion that the importance of anti-SLOC relative to other naval missions had not been established; there may have been scant General Staff-level consensus as to how best to use the Navy's non-nuclear-missile armed forces to best advantage within the context of current strategy.

#### D. 1978 GORSHKOV RETRENCHMENT

During 1978, Gorshkov made no remark upon anti-SLOC operations up until almost the end of the year; his pronouncements emphasized the theme of Navy unity with the other Armed Forces almost to the exclusion of all else. The most "progressive" anti-SLOC arguments were being made by relatively junior officers, and frequently through the rhetorical device of quoting appropriate excerpts from Western military authorities; no open

assertions for a high-priority anti-SLOC missions were made. By late in the year, it appeared that Gorshkov was again able to rank anti-SLOC as far up as second on the list of wartime Navy missions, perhaps signalling that the "progressives" were gaining ground in justification for a high-priority anti-SLOC campaign. Admirals Gorshkov and Smirnov repeated the theme of Navy cooperation with the Armed Forces twice in the early months of 1978. Gorshkov wrote in the February Military Herald,

Performing their assigned combat missions during the war, navymen ensured the stability of our Ground Forces' coastal flanks...the Navy performed its missions in close coordination with other services of the Armed Forces and with other combat arms of the services...There was particularly close coordination between the Navy and the Ground Forces, which took on themselves the main burden of combat operations in the war.<sup>57</sup>

Smirnov emphasized much the same themes in the February Naval Digest; his remarks, however, included mention of the anti-SLOC mission, though in a very low-ranking precedence:

[In World War II] the Navy reliably insured the stability of the coastal flanks of the Red Army, [and] delivered powerful strikes on the ships, bases, and communications of the enemy...<sup>58</sup>

As noted above, and as would become even more apparent later in the year, the theme of Navy unity and precedence for support-the-flanks operations was unusually prominent among Gorshkov's statements during

this period, and few substantive assertions on the place of anti-SLOC in naval operations were to be found.

Discussions of the economic and military significance of SLOCs to NATO appeared several times over the course of the next several months. Articles in the February and March issues of Naval Digest noted the importance of SLOCs to the economies of the littoral nations of the Atlantic Basin.<sup>59</sup> Vice Admiral Solov'yev in particular noted that due to the maritime nature of the NATO alliance and its dependence upon the military-economic potential of the U.S.,

...there is a need to anticipate large scale battles in the vast expanses of the World Ocean; the importance of armed conflict at sea...is increasing.<sup>60</sup>

Solov'yev hinted here at anti-SLOC operations conducted on an oceanic scale, "in the vast expanses of the World Ocean", rather than the littoral blockade mission recommended by Stalbo the preceding year. The differences between him and Solov'yev exemplify the two schools of thought on the proper scale of anti-SLOC operations; one school favors the prosecution of anti-SLOC operations in the more inshore areas, where attacking forces can be concentrated against both ships and harbor areas. The other emphasizes an oceanic anti-SLOC concept, wherein attacks would be conducted against enemy shipping over a much wider geographic area.



In the May Naval Digest, Captain 1st Rank Ammon ascribed to "foreign specialists" the opinion that SLOCs would become even more important in the event of a future war, and that "the merchant fleet...will be charged in wartime with maintaining the military-economic potential of the state."<sup>61</sup> In that passage, Ammon spelled out an explicit relationship upon which the argument for anti-SLOC rests: The military-economic potential of the seapowers rests upon merchant traffic; hence attacking SLOCs is a basic element of smashing the enemy capacity to make war.

Vice Admiral Solov'yev repeated in June the now familiar language of justification for the vital nature of SLOCs to NATO powers. More interestingly, he included several forceful and convincing quotes from "American naval strategists"; in particular, he quoted Admiral Wright, former SACLANT:

In speaking of the importance of the Atlantic for transoceanic shipments, Admiral Wright remarked: "It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the Atlantic to the West. If we do not succeed in providing reliable lines of communication in a future war, NATO's Armed Forces in Europe will be cut off from America and will suffer defeat."<sup>62</sup>

The use of the opinions of "foreign specialists", attributed or unattributed, is a commonplace feature of Soviet expository writing; what is quoted and how it is treated, however, is of interest. Quotations employed in an ideological context are often used as verbal



confirmation of the hostility of the capitalist world. In the context of the professional military press, however, the quotation is often selected so as to implicitly bear out the truth of a proposition --particularly when the excerpted passages go uncriticized and are explicitly attributed to well-known Western military professionals. In this case, Solov'yev used Admiral Wright's remark to argue for a logical (albeit controversial, hence implicitly stated) conclusion: A strong anti-SLOC campaign will have an important, perhaps decisive effect on the outcome of a war between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

A brief excerpt from an article written by two Army officers appearing in the July issue of Military-Historical Journal provides insight to the grounds for putative Ground Force opposition to Navy emphasis on the growing importance of anti-SLOC operations. The article briefly described the continental character of the Great Patriotic War, and the resulting necessarily "defensive" orientation of the Navy's operations

in supporting the operations of the Ground Forces... Along with these, independent operations of the Navy on maritime communications were also planned."<sup>63</sup>

(But, as certified with a quote from Sea Power of the State, the defensive orientation--that which mandated support-the-flanks operations--prevailed).

If the Lomov-Alferov position represented in some degree a Ground Forces point of view, it may be that the dominant categorization of anti-SLOC as an "independent" mission opened its proponents up to suspicions of strategic disunity. Anti-SLOC was historically conducted almost solely by the Navy, and more importantly, by its separate appellation of "independent", anti-SLOC is by definition a non-supporting mission--one with no demonstrated close relationship to the goals of the main conflict, which has been and remains the ground campaign. The above-noted admonishment by Stalbo<sup>47</sup> to clearly demonstrate how anti-SLOC supports the goals of the main battle lends credence to this interpretation.

With the numerous articles in print to commemorate Navy Day, (at least) four declarations of Navy solidarity with the Armed Forces appeared in major military and civilian media; the first appearing below was released by Minister of Defense Ustinov in Red Star, the second two by Fleet Admiral Gorshkov in a Radio Moscow broadcast and in Pravda, respectively, and the fourth by Admiral Grishanov in Izvestia.

Now the USSR Navy, in a single combat formation with the other services of the Armed Forces, is reliably insuring the protection of socialist gains...<sup>64</sup>

...the personnel of ships and units are guarding the great gains of socialism carefully in a single combat

formation with the other services of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union.<sup>65</sup>

The sortie of our Navy into the ocean...[has] augmented the capability of the Soviet Armed Forces for repulsing aggression from wherever it may come.<sup>66</sup>

In the fiery years of the Great Patriotic War, navymen reliably insured the strategic stability of the coastal flanks of the vast front. Jointly with the Ground Forces, they heroically defended coastal cities and naval bases, landed assault forces, and waged a heroic struggle against the forces of the fascist navy.<sup>67</sup>

As noted above<sup>41</sup>, Navy Day is an occasion historically devoted to declarations of solidarity with the Armed Forces and the Soviet people. Nowhere in the available texts cited above is the "independent" anti-SLOC mission mentioned. Despite Gorshkov's high ranking of anti-SLOC in Sea Power of the State, Admiral Grishanov makes no mention of it as a wartime mission. Grishanov's words represent virtually the ideal canon--from an ostensible Ground Forces perspective--for the Navy's participation in the war. The only Navy contribution to be (even vaguely) acknowledged which is not directly related to Ground Force missions or operations is cited last. The near identity of Ustinov's and Gorshkov's statements, the wide dissemination of the message through Red Star, the major military newspaper, Radio Moscow, and the party and state national newspapers suggests the intent to widely reinforce an important precept--unity of the Navy's history and goals

with those of the Armed Forces as a whole--which some in the military hierarchy may have felt was not as well understood as it ought to be by all concerned.

Gorshkov returned once again to the cooperation theme before the year is out, with a conventional recitation of Navy missions during the war:

[In World War II, the Navy conducted the following missions in support of the defensive operations of the Ground Forces in coastal sectors:]

- (1) Cooperated with the Ground Forces to secure their strategic flanks...
- (2) Conducted independent operations on the communications of the adversary;...

During the strategic offensives, the fleets:

- (1) Aided in defeating the coastal [ground] forces of the enemy;
- (2) Disrupted the supply and evacuation of his troops;...

The Navy [in World War II] sank hundreds of enemy combatant and merchant ships carrying troops and various cargoes at sea and at their bases. The enemy did not receive critically needed reinforcements. These very significant losses often prevented him from fully using even those troops which were already on the field of battle.<sup>68</sup>

Of note, Gorshkov returned to the relatively high (second place) ranking for anti-SLOC, which was more commensurate with that earlier accorded to it in Sea Power of the State. It was also notable that he adopted the Stalbo approach to justifying the importance of anti-SLOC--he incorporated at least a cursory account of the effect ship/tonnage losses had on German capability to fight the ground battle.

A very junior officer, Captain 3rd Rank Kabalin, contributed to the anti-SLOC discussion in August, not with a mission statement or recommendation for the Soviet Navy, but with a report on the NATO exercise "Ocean Safari"--which by what is reported, and by the fact of its acceptance by the Naval Digest editorial board (which included Vice Admiral Stalbo), suggests that more senior Navy officers deemed it a significant contribution.

The NATO command holds that, in the event of a war in Europe, one of the missions of the naval forces would be [protecting SLOCs]...the main threat would be presented by the [USSR's] submarines. The NATO command views this problem as a very difficult one and foresees heavy losses. These losses, in the estimation of specialists, could amount to as much as 66% of the total of merchant ships. Therefore, antisubmarine warfare would be of decisive significance.<sup>69</sup>

Kabalin also employed the "foreign specialist" device to advance a possibly controversial thesis; however, he equates heavy shipping losses with "decisive significance", which is a reprise to the pre-Stalbo technique of justifying anti-SLOC operations.

At year's end, Kuz'min asserts, though does nothing to demonstrate, a direct relationship between anti-SLOC and the ground campaign:

...the disruption and limitation of the actions...of the merchant ships themselves [as a result of sea blockade] exert a direct influence on the capability of the enemy for further opposition.<sup>70</sup>



Kuz'min, like Kabalin above, if he had taken Stalbo to heart, appeared to have no clear perception of how to proceed in relating the influence of anti-SLOC on the ground campaign. In that regard, the most explicit responses to Stalbo's advice appeared to have come from V'yunenko<sup>50</sup>, and to lesser degree, from Gorshkov himself.

Gorshkov's references to anti-SLOC since Sea Power of the State through 1978 were entirely retrospective and Soviet Navy-oriented--i.e., he treated only of the Great Patriotic War and never of the anti-SLOC operations of the Western allies. His ranking of Soviet Navy anti-SLOC during the war was also quite variable over the period. These factors invite the speculation that both the historical and the current status of anti-SLOC were "hot" issues--hot enough to induce him to forswear for a time the somewhat heretical "progressive" position vis-a-vis oceanic anti-SLOC until an initial consensus had materialized. Relatively junior (hence obscure) officers such as V'yunenko<sup>50</sup> and Kabalin<sup>69</sup> were advancing the more "progressive" themes during this period, while Gorshkov's public statements would probably be subjected to exacting scrutiny at the General Staff level. He may therefore have been obliged to modify his previous "progressive" statements to better conform to "conservative" General Staff



orthodoxy. The utter lack of CINC Navy commentary on current SLOC issues could indicate that the issue was currently so disputatious in the General Staff that it was deemed prudent to maintain silence rather than reveal open dispute at the most senior levels of military leadership.

#### IV. THE ANTI-SLOC DEBATE 1979-80

##### A. TRANSITION YEARS

The years 1979-1980 were a transitional period in the anti-SLOC debate; the frequency of relevant articles after mid-1979 was to fall off radically from that observed during the years 1976-1978. The trend of diminishing discussion becomes apparent by reference to the following figures. Using Naval Digest and Military-Historical Journal as the source periodicals, this study has uncovered the following distribution of articles involving significant discussion of anti-SLOC operations:

	<u>76</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>78</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>80</u>
Total	7	6	9	8	3

For the years 1976-1979, a mean of 7.5 articles per year centered on or involved a discussion of anti-SLOC in a historical and/or current context. Beginning in 1980, and continuing into subsequent years, the rate of discussion measured by numbers of articles diminishes to less than half that observed previously. This reduction may be due to a shift in military doctrine, which will be discussed in Chapter VII.

Despite the reduction in numbers of contributions, significant aspects of the debate come to light during this period. They include: Fleet Admiral Smirnov

reiterated Stalbo's call for new analysis of anti-SLOC operations, which suggested that the anti-SLOC mission had yet to be justified at senior levels of the military hierarchy; a comprehensive "progressive" assessment of anti-SLOC operations was made by Captain 1st Rank Makeyev; and a book by a Ground Forces author revealed the origin of an enduring evaluation of the anti-SLOC mission as an "independent" type of mission rather than a "joint" type of mission.

#### B. 1979 CONTINUED CONSERVATISM AND LULL

In February, Captains 1st Rank Bannikov and Filamashin published an article in Military-Historical Journal entitled "Blockade Actions of the Navies in the First World War, 1914-18". Several of the reasons assessed for the lack of success of both British and German naval forces during the war were of interest due to their implications for positioning the authors in the current anti-SLOC debate. The two major conclusions of interest were:

- 1) Blockades must be of a geographic scale commensurate with the numbers of forces available. Blockades over large distances are usually not effective.
- 2) Raiding operations which are not coordinated with Ground Forces operations will be of little significant effect.<sup>71</sup>

The first conclusion fell in with the littoral-blockade school of thought as championed by Stalbo. The

wider-ranging oceanic anti-SLOC blockade mission was disparaged; according to the authors, neither England or Germany was successful in imposing a wide-scale blockade on the other during World War I.<sup>72</sup> The second argues for the necessity of integrating anti-SLOC (widely characterized as an "independent" mission) with the requirements of the ground campaign. Each conclusion was probably more in consonance with the "conservative" General Staff perception of appropriate naval strategy, which would be to tie the Navy closely to the flanks and structure their operations wholly in coordination with those of the Ground Forces.

Sysoyev returned in March to Naval Digest with a study of naval operations during the Great Patriotic War. He cited the German Admiral Ruge on the importance of secure SLOCs to the Wehrmacht effort on the Eastern Front: "Waging war in this desolate area [the northern flank] depended entirely on the capacity to maintain transport by sea."<sup>73</sup> Later in the article, he asserted, without arguing for, the "substantial effect" which anti-SLOC action had "in the coastal sectors of the fronts."<sup>74</sup>

Sysoyev made what might be called the "minimalist" claim for the influence of anti-SLOC on the ground battle--that it did have influence, but only in the coastal sectors, which, of course, were scarcely the

most important of the war. In his listing of the types of operations conducted by the Soviet Navy, those conducted jointly with the Army were listed first; among the second group of "independent" Navy operations, anti-SLOC was listed first<sup>74</sup>--more evidence of the low priority given to what are assessed to be non-supportive missions.

Fleet Admiral Egorov set forth the same listing in Military-Historical Journal two months later--that assisting the Ground Forces was first priority, and that anti-SLOC was first among the "independent missions"<sup>75</sup>. Such modest agreement between two senior Admirals could be evidence of at least a factional consensus on the status of anti-SLOC, a faction tending to the "conservative" side of the debate.

In May, Fleet Admiral Smirnov echoed Stalbo's February 1977 admonition to research carefully the effect of anti-SLOC on the ground campaign.

After all, in order to make quite clear the role played by the Navy in the war, it is absolutely essential to determine just how the damage inflicted on the enemy at sea affected the fighting capacity of his army groups on land...the destruction of enemy ships at their bases, the effect of strikes against sea and ocean communications on combat actions on land, [is] in need of some extensive and purposeful study.<sup>76</sup>

The reappearance of Stalbo's theme over the signature of a Fleet Admiral would suggest that so far as the highest levels of military leadership were

concerned, there was still no adequate analysis to support the rationale for a high-priority anti-SLOC campaign. The appropriate developments had not come to pass, and the status of the anti-SLOC mission remained uncertain.

At midyear, Captain 1st Rank Aristov discussed the development of Soviet anti-SLOC actions during the war. In the initial stages, anti-SLOC actions were sporadic, inadequately organized, and hence failed of their goal--the complete destruction of the convoys. However, when "operational cooperation between heterogeneous forces" was attained, operational goals were successfully achieved.<sup>77</sup> Aristov's article incorporated two different points. One operational point was that successful anti-SLOC operations depend in large part upon adequate forms of force control. One strategic point was that successful anti-SLOC operations depend in large part upon the cooperation between different types of forces--an assessment which may signal a trend to evaluate anti-SLOC in terms more inclusive of the other branches of the Armed Forces.

At the same time, yet another detailed study of modern SLOCs came forth from Captain 2nd Rank Strelkov. This effort analyzed the current volume, type, and patterns of ocean trade in the Pacific Basin, and concludes:



The island status of a number of countries and the great expanse of the ocean routes places securing sea communications among the first-priority problems.<sup>78</sup>

Strelkov's approach and conclusions are of a familiar type, but is evidence in its banality of the persistent effort to marshal analyses which support an anti-SLOC strategy. Strelkov appears to be coming down on the side of the oceanic anti-SLOC school rather than that of the littoral blockade school.

Another contribution by Fleet Admiral Smirnov, this in July, cites "command documents" written prior to the beginning of the war which codified the Navy's missions. They were, (in order): Offensive operations in "open sea and air", offensive operations in the coastal zone and against enemy bases, active coastal defense, cooperation with Ground Force operations in the coastal zone, SLOC protection operations, and finally, anti-SLOC operations.<sup>79</sup> Nonetheless, "the stability of the [Soviet] defense and the tempo of the offensives" much depended upon the success of anti-SLOC, "one of the most important missions".<sup>80</sup>

Smirnov's message is somewhat mixed; the list of mission areas suggests a low place for anti-SLOC, and the theme of shoulder-to-shoulder with the Ground Forces is treated with traditional reverence. However, he also notes (3 pages later) that anti-SLOC had an important influence on the course of the fighting on the ground

fronts. The implicit conclusion may be that anti-SLOC action turned out to be, in retrospect, of greater import than than was reflected in pre-war mission assignments.

In July, Captain 1st Rank Makayev dramatically re-opened the current anti-SLOC debate with a strongly argued "progressive" littoral blockade position based on a comprehensive evaluation of the importance of SLOCs in a future war. According to Makayev, each of the two World Wars demonstrated the tendency for expansion in the scope of anti-SLOC operations. Local wars since then--Korea and Vietnam--bore out that tendency; both required large shipments of men and material to support military operations. However, when his discussion turned to the modern era, Makayev, with familiar technique, made his argument with the unchallenged assessments and quotes of "foreign specialists" and U.S. Admirals. For example,

Under modern conditions, according to foreign specialists, transoceanic communications will play the role of a most important factor determining the course and outcome of the war in continental TVDs. "If we cannot insure the reliability of our communications in a future war, observed American Admiral Wright, "the NATO armed forces in Europe will be cut off from American and defeated".<sup>81</sup>

And,

In view of the enormous dependence of the economies and combat capabilities of the forces of many states on uninterrupted sea communications, it is logical to expect that the combat actions on communications will

be intense. The experience of the past gives evidence of this. They will be conducted on a wide scale, pressing into service considerable forces and means. Such views are held, for example, by the Commander-in-Chief of NATO naval forces, Admiral Kidd, and the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Vice Admiral Engen.<sup>82</sup>

Anti-SLOC, according to Makeyev, will be conducted with two types of operations: those aimed at destroying convoys and individual ships at sea, and those aimed at destroying port areas and defending forces. (Destruction of transport aircraft will also be an important part of the overall effort). Moreover, the use of nuclear weapons against all types of targets would "create favorable conditions" for further prosecution with conventional weapons.<sup>83</sup> Blockading operations are a feasible alternative to the more difficult mission of oceanic anti-SLOC; under modern conditions, blockade will be a component of the anti-SLOC struggle, and will be a joint operation with the other armed forces. The outcome of the anti-SLOC campaign will have a powerful influence on the course of the war:

The success of military operations and capacity of individual countries to resist will depend to a great extent on the outcome of the conflict on the transoceanic SLOC.<sup>84</sup>

Makeyev's article was a powerful, unified presentation, made all the more effective by its crafting. He brought the other Armed Forces "on board" anti-SLOC, and argued for blockade operations as the

most effective technique of anti-SLOC. Blockading operations, according to Makeyev, are easier to conduct than the oceanic mission. Anti-SLOC goals--undermining the military-economic potential of the enemy--are of prime importance, but blockade operations are quite consonant with the more traditional role of the Navy, which was as an inshore instrument, hence geographically more associated with the land campaign and coordinated with/subordinated to/less "independent" of the Ground Forces.

Makeyev's mention of anti-SLOC in the aftermath of nuclear strikes was also of interest in its novelty in the open literature; it suggested a belief that a war under such conditions could be of a duration such that attrition of sea shipments would still be of significant influence--in other words, a long "limited nuclear war" scenario.

In the Navy Day (July 30) issue of Red Star, Fleet Admiral Smirnov made brief reference to heavy German merchant and combatant shipping losses on the Eastern Front, "which made a considerable contribution to smashing the military machine of the fascist Reich."<sup>85</sup> It's mention is of interest by contrast to its absence in years past. Barring that brief reference, the anti-SLOC issue surfaces no more for the remainder of the year; the extended silence, by comparison to the

voluminous discussion which has been noted during the preceding years, could indicate that the issue may have become altogether too divisive for further public airing, and that a period of consensus-building was deemed to be in order.

#### C. 1980 THE LULL CONTINUES

The open press was virtually silent on the topic of anti-SLOC issues through much of 1980 as well; however, one contribution which reveals the background for the distinction maintained by Soviet writers between missions which "support" the Ground Forces and those which are "independent" came from a book by Colonel I. A. Korotkov. That source cited the Field Regulations of the Red Army 1940 as the origin of the distinction.

It was planned that the Navy would be employed for support of the action of the Ground Forces in coastal sectors and for independent operations with the aim of destroying the navy of an enemy at sea, of interfering with his sea communications, and of destroying naval bases and [other] coastal installations.<sup>86</sup>

Korotkov later reiterated the dichotomy: Joint operations involved support-the-flank missions, amphibious operations, and defense against amphibious assault; independent operations included anti-naval, anti-SLOC, and attacks against shore installations. Moreover, submarines were viewed as a type of naval vessel "intended basically [only] for action on sea communications."<sup>87</sup>



The origin of "joint" and "independent" types of operations shed light on a possible reason for what appears to be a considerable gulf between the "conservatives" and the "progressives" in the continuing anti-SLOC controversy. The governing orders in force for the Red Army during the first phases of the Great Patriotic War had made clear the two basic types of naval operations--the "joint" and the "independent".

Throughout the course of the war, the realities of the time--a massive invasion on a broad continental front which could only be thrown back with enormous resources of men and equipment on the ground, the small enclosed seas on the continental flanks, the types and numbers of naval forces available, (which were quite inadequate to break through and fight an oceanic campaign)--all inevitably mandated that the Navy could do no more than fight close on the flanks of the ground front, whether in "joint" amphibious operations or "independent" anti-SLOC operations. The supporting, subordinate character of Soviet naval operations during that time, their de facto "jointness", was established by the limits of the possible.

However, in the postwar era--particularly beginning in the mid-60's--as the Navy expanded in numbers and sizes of ships, operating areas, and destructive power, it became truly oceanic. The Navy's capability to carry



out world-wide missions became unique; its reach had expanded far beyond that of the Ground Forces. The potential for independent operations became real--it had the potential to conduct "independent" operations not merely in the vicinity of Kronstadt or the Crimea, but at the GIUK gap, on the far reaches of the Atlantic and Pacific SLOCs, and beyond.

At the same time, some Navy writers--some junior contributors, but the CINC Navy in particular, were analyzing the both the Great Patriotic War and/or current problems in such a way that the lessons of the war were devalued or redefined in some subtle ways. Some commentaries strongly hinted or stated explicitly that the type of operations referred to in Field Regulations as "independent" were of greater overall significance than those "joint" operations which in fact had been the Navy's main mission during the war--the implication being that the Navy's employment should emphasize "independent" oceanic anti-SLOC operations--due to their effect on the military-economic potential of the enemy--rather than "joint" operations with the Ground Forces. And, as the Stalbo-Gorshkov-Smirnov remarks noted above suggest, some significant group among the senior military leadership were unconvinced that "independent" anti-SLOC operations had any significant impact on the course of

ground campaigns, at least within the context of current military strategy.

For eight months, the anti-SLOC discussion vanished from the pages of the open press; the final references recommence in October 1980 when Captain 1st Rank Dmitriyev published an article in Military-Historical Journal on Soviet submarine operations during the first part of the Great Patriotic War. He characterized SLOCs as of "great military-economic and operational importance" to German forces, both in terms of troop movements and shipments of raw materials to industrial centers.<sup>88</sup> His remarks are distinguished for their non-committal moderation, as were those of Fleet Admiral Sergeyev in reviewing Captain Basov's recently published book The Navy in the Great Patriotic War, 1941-1945 in the October issue of Naval Digest; in that review, he notes:

The Navy was assigned the following missions: to cooperate in every way with the Ground Forces in coastal sectors and to interfere with the sea communications of the enemy.<sup>89</sup>

Here was another occasion of the clear distinction made in the theory of the time between cooperative missions and anti-SLOC missions--theory which, it would appear, still has a powerful influence on the direction and character of the anti-SLOC debate. Later that year, Admiral Navoitsev similarly approved of Basov's

characterization of the two basic types of naval missions during the war.<sup>90</sup>

Admiral Sysoyev's discussion of "Development of the Forms of Warfare at Sea" (Naval Digest, November 1980) was of interest due to its theme of consideration of warfare at sea as basically a joint operation--a theme earlier forwarded by Captain 1st Rank Aristov<sup>77</sup>.

While before warfare at sea was the prerogative of the Navy, now nearly every service of the Armed Forces can carry on combat in the oceanic and sea theaters.<sup>91</sup>

The years 1979-1980 were remarkable for the dearth of commentary in the open press on the topic of anti-SLOC. Although it could be concluded that the absence of debate signalled a solution or resolution of the outstanding issues, several factors suggest otherwise. In May 1979, Fleet Admiral Smirnov<sup>76</sup> signalled the continuing relevance of Stalbo's theme to study closely the influence of anti-SLOC on ground campaigns. Since then, Gorshkov, the CINC Navy, had made no pronouncement on the topic (at least in any of the major professional journals, which is where the mainstream of the debate had been conducted to date).

It may be hypothesized that, at this juncture, the anti-SLOC debate was to some degree exhausted; there appeared to be no resolution of the central theoretical and practical aspects of relating anti-SLOC operations to ground campaign operations. Nor was there any clear

consensus on the issue of the strategic allocation of effort in an anti-SLOC campaign--that is, whether or not anti-SLOC is best conducted on an oceanic scale, in terms of inshore blockading, or a combination of the two.

## V. THE ANTI-SLOC DEBATE 1981-1983

### A. TREND TO PROGRESSIVISM

Like much of 1979-1980, the explicit anti-SLOC debate was frequently absent from the pages of the periodical press during the period 1981-1983; during that three year span, only six significant anti-SLOC articles appeared. However, 1981 marked the commencement of the Theory of the Navy Debate. The process of that debate is of considerable interest as a separate but related topic, and will be treated in Chapter VI. This chapter continues the assessment of the anti-SLOC debate as it progressed during the period of the Theory of the Navy Debate, which was concluded by Admiral Gorshkov in July 1983.

In general, it could be said that this period of the anti-SLOC debate emphasized the conduct of anti-SLOC as a "joint" operation with other branches of the Armed Forces; most noticeable, however, was the growing pre-eminence of the "progressive" faction. In particular, the articles by Rear Admiral Pushkin and Vice Admiral Gontayev, the only anti-SLOC analyses to appear during late 1982-mid 1983, gave distinctly favorable reviews of German anti-SLOC operations during World War II, and how such operations could be conducted even more effectively in modern times.

## B. 1981 FIRST INDICATIONS

Only three articles dealing with anti-SLOC appeared in the professional military press during 1981. One was by Captains 1st Rank Lukyanov and Solov'yev in the March issue of Naval Digest, wherein they reiterated in familiar language the current economic and military significance of the Atlantic SLOCs<sup>92</sup>. Another by Vice Admiral Solov'yev in the April issue of Naval Digest, discussed the importance of merchant fleets in the past and during modern times; in form and content, it was also a familiar type of argument..."According to the [American] specialists, SLOC will be of enormous significance in all kinds of military conflicts."<sup>93</sup>

The third article of consequence, this by Admiral Sysoyev, appeared in the September issue of Military-Historical Journal. By and large a recapitulation of familiar criticisms of German and Allied naval forces control during World War II, it incorporated summary remarks bearing out the requirement to conduct anti-SLOC operations as a joint undertaking rather than as a unique Navy mission:

The war demonstrated the fact that it was unfeasible to attempt to disrupt the communications of a large enemy state with a single branch of forces, even in large numbers and with reliable control.<sup>94</sup>

Sysoyev also noted that, due to the scale of anti-SLOC (and SLOC defense) operations, it became



necessary to control them at the "higher levels" of command--reinforcing the concept of the use of naval forces in concert with other branches (at the TVD or higher level). The lessons to be drawn from the record of the battles in the Atlantic emphasized the requirement for coordination of planning, control, and execution of oceanic anti-SLOC operations with other branches.

#### C. 1982 THE PROGRESSIVES EMERGE

Captains 1st Rank Morozov and Krivinsky returned to the topic of SLOCs in the August Naval Digest (after more than a six-year absence<sup>39</sup>) with a survey of the importance of straits and narrows and the types of combat actions associated with them. According to the authors, the experience of World War II demonstrated the importance of straits and narrows "as an important military-geographical factor determining the course and outcome of armed struggle in individual parts of the ocean."<sup>95</sup> Such areas are increasing in importance due to three basic factors:

- 1) Increases in the scale of ocean shipping.
- 2) The probable coalition nature of a future war, which will involve the need for intertheater naval maneuvers and resupply of ground forces.

3) The improvement of naval weaponry, particularly nuclear-missile weaponry, which increases naval capabilities in the battles for straits.<sup>96</sup>

According to the authors, due to the increase in capabilities of modern weapons, sensors, and platforms (particularly long range aviation), many areas which are not straits or narrows in the literal sense are now subject to similar blockades by coordinated all-arms forces. Some far northern straits, including the Bering and Drake straits, and the straits of the "Canadian archipelago" will become much more important in the case of a future war than has previously been the case.<sup>96</sup>

The Morozov-Krivinsky article brought up several new points of interest. In order, they are:

- 1) Straits and narrows are of special relevance in the conduct of blockade operations. This aspect of anti-SLOC operations had not previously appeared in the discussion, but indicates a sensitivity to their utility in allowing the concentration of force at a particular point to achieve the goals of anti-SLOC.
- 2) The application of the term "blockade" was extended to cover operations conducted in the broader oceanic zone outside of restricted waters. Previous mentions of broad area blockading operations conducted during the two world wars had disparaged their effectiveness, and had made no remark upon current

feasibility. It would appear that at least the authors now believe that current technology and techniques of force control enable the effective prosecution of blockades over wider areas than was the case in the past.

3) Far northern straits areas were specifically mentioned as being of increased significance in the modern era. Although the authors do not spell out the reason for this, they may be implying the use of such areas as focal points for defensive blockades to SSBN bastions in polar and high sub-polar areas.

In October, Rear Admiral Pushkin published a detailed article which favorably reviewed German submarine raiding operations off the U.S. east coast during World War II. The author described the German decision to commit submarines to those special operations as "unquestionably wise". The submarine attacks on the coastal SLOCs

...literally stunned the command of the U.S. Navy. A shortage of forces prevented the Americans from organizing effective ASW defense of the shipping lanes.<sup>97</sup>

According to Pushkin, the great German successes in the early stages of the campaign were due to surprise, skillful shifting of the focus of attacks from place to place, and lack of U.S. preparation for ASW. The U.S. was able to prevail only after a considerable buildup of

forces, development of effective ASW technologies, and refinement of the convoy system.

In summarizing the modern development of Western ASW strategy, Pushkin concluded

The potential of contemporary nuclear-powered submarines to disrupt shipping has increased immeasurably...the NATO leadership believes that the problems of combatting nuclear-powered submarines are still far from being solved.<sup>98</sup>

Pushkin's article was unique in the level of detail it presents in the treatment of German anti-SLOC, and in the numerous approving statements made about the conduct and effectiveness of the brief German campaign. Previous analyses of the whole period of the Battle for the Atlantic had generally accounted for the eventual German failure in terms of errors in resource allocation to submarine construction, lack of support from other naval arms, and the vast Allied ASW effort. Pushkin made but brief mention of the first two factors, and emphasized instead the significance of U.S. countermeasures--and then concludes on the note that no such countermeasures have been developed against nuclear-powered submarines in the modern era.

#### D. 1983 THE FINAL WORD

Only one significant anti-SLOC article appeared prior to the end of the Theory of the Navy Debate in July. It was, however, quite important in that it, like

that of Pushkin above, treated the German anti-SLOC campaign in a favorable light, with a view to the lessons to be learned from it.

Vice Admiral Gontayev published a major article in the January Naval Digest concerning the anti-SLOC battles of World War II and the lessons to be drawn from them. He makes a generally favorable review of the conduct of the German submarine campaign; the German High Command was "basically correct" in its estimate of requiring 700-750 submarines to achieve strategic success in the Atlantic. The variety of submarine types was kept to a minimum, and the correctness of "wolf pack" tactics was demonstrated by reference to their results.<sup>99</sup>

Gontayev also believed that the German uses of forward bases acquired by territorial conquest was quite important:

An essential role in raising the effectiveness of the fight on communications was played by the expansion of the system of basing German submarines. The capture in 1939-1940 of Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, France and Greece permitted the Germans to deploy submarines more rapidly and more safely on various axes, while increasing the submarines stays at sea, and to make wide use of ship repair facilities and shipbuilding yards of the occupied countries.<sup>100</sup>

The German command committed a major error, however, in conducting an indiscriminate transport tonnage war rather than specifically targeting submarines against

military shipments, which were often of paramount strategic significance.

Soviet military science considers this one of the chief flaws of the strategic principles of using Germany's forces...[because the submarine campaign thus] did not inflict essential damage on the military-economic potential of Great Britain and the United States.<sup>101</sup>

Other shortcomings and errors noted by the author echo those recounted by previous commentators (including Gorshkov): inadequate air reconnaissance, inadequate anti-ASW support, problems of control, etc.

Gontayev quoted Sea Power of the State to characterize the change in the strategic situation facing the USSR since the end of World War II: "...now we are threatened with a coalition of naval powers, [and] under certain conditions, these [ocean] axes could be the main ones."<sup>102</sup> He reported without comment the opinion of "foreign specialists" that

Transoceanic communications...have become the most important factor that determines the course and outcome of a war in continental theaters...In a future war, the military-political circles of the United States and NATO directly link the fate of NATO armed forces with the reliability of communications...<sup>103</sup>

He also expected that the scope of anti-SLOC operations will be increased due to the range of nuclear-powered submarines. He remarked through another unattributed "Western opinion" that

...one should expect an avoidance of a "hunt for tonnage" in favor of the complete disruption of sea



communications, which at certain stages of a war will acquire the most important strategic significance.<sup>104</sup>

Gontayev produced a point of view--that anti-SLOC operations focussed on military shipments are of much greater significance than a general "tonnage war"--from two purportedly different forums in this article. One source was retrospective conclusion on the nature of German errors during World War II as adduced by Soviet military science. The other source was a prediction of submarine strategy in a future war by unspecified "Western opinion". It is not unusual for Soviet writers to cite the origins or authors of Western points of view; the absence of any such identification anywhere in an otherwise well-documented article (14 references) plus the identity of views between Soviet military science and "Western opinion" suggests that Soviet, rather than Western views of future submarine operations are being communicated in this case.

Such is probably also the true for Gontayev's ostensible reporting of the "Western opinion" that nuclear-powered submarines are not only effective against warships and transports, but also against "loading and unloading points"--i.e., the use of submarines against harbors and port facilities. Here as in the cases above, Gontayev may be using the device of reporting Western assessment of possible Soviet

submarine operations (without criticizing those reports) as a way to disseminate information about current practices of naval art.

That issue of interpretation aside, Gontayev's article is also of interest due to the line taken that anti-SLOC warfare can/will be the most important factor in determining the outcome of a war in Europe. The strong, explicit character of this opinion is unprecedented, and may indicate that the "progressives" in the anti-SLOC debate were presenting a convincing case for a high-priority anti-SLOC campaign at the General Staff level.

Gontayev, like Pushkin, was also quite unusual in his positive review of German submarine operations and tactics. Like Pushkin, reported what, in his view, was done correctly and effectively. Rather than focussing almost exclusively on the strategic failures of the German High Command, he devoted close attention to the the operational and tactical successes and failures of the German submarine forces; he highlighted the lessons to be learned from the German experience, and obliquely communicated how some of those lessons were being incorporated to modern naval art.

Two articles devoted to anti-SLOC operations appeared at midyear, just before the end of the Theory of the Navy Debate; both were analyses of Soviet

submarine operations during the Great Patriotic War. That by Captain 1st Rank Karmenok<sup>105</sup> in May concerned the problems and solutions of operational control of submarines in littoral waters; that by Rear Admiral Pushkin<sup>106</sup> in June reviewed the overall operations of Soviet submarines during the war with emphasis on anti-SLOC. Neither presented new insights to the status or process of the development of anti-SLOC thinking in the professional community; their appearance did, however, signal the continuing relevance of the anti-SLOC issue as a topic of professional interest.

The years 1981-1983 marked a turnaround in the tone and orientation of the anti-SLOC debate; the late trend, exemplified by Sysoyev, Pushkin, and Gontayev above, was to "emphasize the positive" in assessment of the past record and present potential of such operations. It appeared that anti-SLOC had been re-evaluated as a "respectable" Navy mission, one to be fully explored for lessons to be applied in a modern context. The topic and process of the Theory of the Navy Debate may well have had an important part to play in that re-assessment of the anti-SLOC mission, and attention will now turn to that issue.

## VI. 1981-1983: THEORY OF THE NAVY DEBATE

The Theory of the Navy Debate commenced in April and May 1981 with the appearance of two articles in Naval Digest by Vice Admiral Stalbo entitled "Some Issues of the Theory of the Development and Employment of the Navy". It featured a remarkable degree of strong and explicit disagreement among the contributors, and was conducted in good part among quite senior officers, including Fleet Admiral Gorshkov. Indeed, the debate was so intense as to arouse the suspicion among some observers that it amounted to an attack upon Gorshkov himself, one possibly associated with an attempt to accomplish his removal as Commander in Chief of the Navy.<sup>110</sup> Although that anticipated result has not come to pass, the Theory of the Navy Debate, (hereinafter TND), is a significant period in the survey of the anti-SLOC debate, for its development has implications for addressing the divisive issues which had arisen to date among the anti-SLOC participants. (For the sake of proper perspective, it should be noted that only half of the ten articles comprising TND address issues of direct relevance to the anti-SLOC debate; if anti-SLOC was a source of TND, it was certainly not the only significant issue to surface during the course of the exchange).

A central problem for those who have implied a more important role for the anti-SLOC mission has been to relate the immediate effect of anti-SLOC operations --enemy losses of merchant ships--to its ultimate influence on the outcome in the decisive continental theaters of operations. As has been previously noted, Stalbo first noted this need in February-March 1977 and called for the requisite historical study and theoretical elaboration<sup>48</sup>. Some subsequent contributors appeared to have heeded the call--but their elucidations did not extend beyond assertions that merchant tonnage losses translated into losses of men, equipment, and munitions which were not available for combat in the ground battle.

Moreover, the "independent" vs. "joint" distinction between anti-SLOC and other types of naval missions endured in analysis of the Great Patriotic War--suggesting that not all parties to the discussion were convinced that anti-SLOC was either a joint type of operation or an operation conducted in the service of joint goals.

Inasmuch as Stalbo was the first to call for a new approach to analysis to one of the problems of naval art, it was appropriate that he be the first to undertake the larger effort devoted to establishing the comprehensive theoretical and practical relationship

between the Navy, the other Armed Forces, and military science as a whole.

Stalbo began his first article by criticizing the general failure to adequately discuss the increased importance of naval warfare since the Navy's equipment with strategic weapons. The vast growth in the capabilities of modern navies had not been matched, according to Stalbo, by growth of the theory by which the structure and missions of the Navy will be developed and understood. The subject of his theory is a broader conception of that which had earlier appeared in February-March 1977--the problem of demonstrating the influence of a particular naval mission (anti-SLOC) on continental campaigns.

The subject of this theory is naval warfare in all its diversity, and its link with armed conflict in continental theaters; organizational development of the Navy; and the Navy's preparation and employment for repulsing aggression and in peacetime.<sup>111</sup>

Of Stalbo's broader subject, only the first is of concern to us here--the link of naval warfare "with armed conflict in continental theaters". According to Stalbo, the development of a modern fleet armed with nuclear-missile weapons means that the strategic employment of the navy has grown in importance relative to its operational-tactical level:

...it would be incorrect to seek the primary ways of employing the Navy at the strategic level [in the modern era] during the initial period of Soviet naval



art at a time when the Navy could accomplish only missions at the operational-tactical level and only in its own coastal regions.<sup>112</sup>

Stalbo appears to be concerned to demonstrate something of the limits to the theory of naval art which has been derived from the experience of previous wars; the development of an oceanic nuclear-missile armed navy has sharply increased its strategic significance in the postwar period. "Fundamentally new" developments have also occurred in the operational-strategic sphere, such as operations aimed at destroying enemy SSBNs, aircraft carriers, and ASW forces, and operations to win supremacy in an ocean theater of operations and fight on sea lines of communication.<sup>113</sup> The theory of naval tactics, the final component of the theory of naval art, deals with the conduct of naval action, which is "the primary means for winning victory". Naval tactics includes both all-arms and single service actions "(for example, submarine forces in a remote part of the ocean against an enemy convoy)."<sup>114</sup>

Among the important principles of naval strategy cited by Stalbo in the second half of his initial two-part series was "Seizing and holding the initiative". Possession of the initiative was most effective when it was a part of offensive operations conducted jointly with the Ground Forces.

A good example of this can be seen in the Black Sea Fleet's operation against the enemy's lines of communication between the Crimea and the western shore of the Black Sea. Within a short period of time...the fleet destroyed more than 100 ships and boats and some 40,000 enemy soldiers and officers.<sup>115</sup>

The anti-SLOC issue per se was clearly not the central element of Stalbo's concerns in these articles. At least one of his fundamental goals was seemingly to open up general discussion and reassessment of the significance of the Navy based on its development in the postwar era. The explicit mentions of anti-SLOC actions noted above were largely illustrative historical examples of well-established aspects of Soviet military theory. One departure from past practice is worthy of note, however, in that he cited Black Sea Fleet anti-SLOC operations as an example of "joint" operations with the Ground Forces rather than as "independent"--which may be an indication that Stalbo believes anti-SLOC should be re-evaluated in terms more emphatic of the unified goals of all the Armed Forces.

Rear Admiral Kostev was the first to respond to Stalbo; his article appeared in the November Naval Digest, and made several criticisms of interest to the anti-SLOC debate. First among them was that it was impossible to study the problems of the Navy in isolation; an integrated approach is required. In Kostev's view, Stalbo failed to fully explain the status

of the theory of the Navy in terms of its position within the larger framework of a theory of the Armed Forces, which in turn would be subsumed under the still broader concept of Military Science. Naval theory must examine armed conflict not only at sea but also on the land and in the air within the framework of limits of action by naval forces. An integrated approach is necessary in order to determine methods of achieving common goals with other branches of the Armed Forces.

Kostev's criticism of Stalbo is reminiscent of Stalbo's criticism of the anti-SLOC debate in 1977. Kostev was calling for less Navy separatism, more integration of Navy theory to the greater body of existing military science, more demonstrated congruence of Navy objectives with the larger goals of the other Armed Forces.

Kostev, however, also believed that it was superfluous to argue that some problems of warfare are specific to the Navy; each branch of the Armed Forces has inherently different features which require different development, organization and employment.

Warfare against enemy submarines and surface combatants in the remote parts of the ocean, interruption and disruption of his shipping, and so on are "purely" naval missions accomplished primarily by naval forces...Under present day conditions each branch of the Armed Forces can exert pressure on the enemy in practically any geographic medium, but most effectively and purposefully only in the one inherent to it.<sup>116</sup>

Kostev, then, argues that the current state of the the Theory of the Navy is deficient in terms of its integration with other theories of the Armed Forces, and in its failure to recognize that unique missions are characteristic of each branch of the Armed forces. Each mission, nonetheless, must be based upon a thorough understanding of its relationship to the strategic objectives of all types of combat as set forth in the principles of military science.

This opening exchange between Stalbo and Kostev addresses important elements of the recent anti-SLOC debate, including: The transformation of the strategic significance of naval warfare since the Great Patriotic War, the development of naval theory to define the relationship between naval warfare and armed conflict in general, and the status and legitimacy of "independent" versus "joint" naval operations. In fact, the antecedents of the TND suggests that it may not be too much to say that the TND is in part a result of divisive issues raised and heretofore unresolved in the course of the anti-SLOC debate.

In January 1982, Admiral Chernavin took up the issues raised by Admiral Stalbo and critiqued by Admiral Kostev. Chernavin followed Kostev in noting the capability of all of the Armed Forces to bring force to bear on the enemy on land, in the air, and on or under

the sea, and noted, as did Kostev, that each of the Armed Forces operates best in its own peculiar environment. He likewise called for the unification of "all knowledge and warfare within the framework and limits of a single, unified military science."<sup>117</sup>

Like Kostev, Chernavin rejected Stalbo's definition of "naval strategy" in favor of that found in the Soviet Military Encyclopedia (1976 edition). Stalbo's definition was quite brief by comparison to the more official version, and made no inclusion of the joint character of naval combat operations with those of the other Armed Forces. The encyclopedia version, as cited by Chernavin, reads in part:

Naval strategy is the theory and practice of preparing for and conducting combat operations with naval forces, independently and in collaboration with other branches of the armed forces...Naval strategy studies the nature of warfare in sea and ocean theaters of military operations and develops methods of preparing for and conducting operations and battles, both independently and in conjunction with commands (forces) of other branches of the armed forces.<sup>118</sup>

The rest of Chernavin's critique made no mention of issues related to the anti-SLOC debate, except to cite German submarine operations during World War II as a historical example of the principle of "massing of forces and means"; as the result, the Germans "achieved great successes" on the Atlantic SLOCs during the period 1941-1942.



Chernavin's concluding remarks raises the possibility that the anti-SLOC debate reflected genuine uncertainties within the senior military leadership as to the proper nature and scope of anti-SLOC doctrine:

On the whole, debates on Navy theory in the pages of Soviet Naval Digest have a great significance, since from the lack of unanimity of opinion on many theoretical problems, serious difficulties sometimes arise in our practical activity.<sup>119</sup>

Chernavin's comments on Stalbo's work was overall, less critical than was Kostev's, but much in the same line: Naval strategy to date was inadequately integrated with other theories of the Armed Forces and to the precepts of Military Science in general--a charge similar to that made almost five years ago by Stalbo himself in reference to issues raised in the anti-SLOC debate.

Captain 1st Rank Shlomin provided the next contribution of interest to TND in the April issue of Naval Digest. The anti-SLOC mission is not explicitly discussed; Shlomin's article, however, like those preceding it in TND, is of interest because of its focus upon issues which have arisen within the context of the anti-SLOC discussion, e.g. the relationship between Navy missions and the overall goals of military combat. Shlomin noted early on that Stalbo "In the main" correctly emphasized the unity of the armed forces, the leading role of military science, and the subordinate



position of the theory within it. Nonetheless, his main criticisms, like those of Kostev and Chernavin above, were of Stalbo's failure to subsume all elements of that theory to the traditional categories of Marxist-Leninist military thought. For example,

...it is impossible to agree with the definition of the "theory of the strategic employment of the Navy" and its place in military science...in [Stalbo's] opinion this theory "...determines the general missions and directions in the development of the operational art and tactics of the Navy"...[But] the strategic employment of the Navy, as of any other branch of the Armed Forces, in the first place, is determined by the policy and the military doctrine of the state and by the unified military strategy stemming from them...It is precisely military strategy which indicates the objectives, missions, and ways and means for employing all the branches of the armed forces...120

The Navy, according to Shlomin, is an integral, important, component part of the Armed Forces. Historically, "paramount attention" was given to the Ground Forces, which was quite appropriate under the circumstances; under modern conditions of increased resources and technology, the importance of the Navy has expanded due to the increase in its capabilities in the realm of both strategic and operational-tactical missions. The other branches of the Armed Forces also have capabilities to accomplish missions in sea and oceanic theaters, and the Navy will work in close cooperation with them. The scope and character of the development of the Navy will be according to the

requirements of building the Armed Forces as a whole, which is a component of the unified Soviet military science.<sup>121</sup>

The thrust of Shlomin's remarks is to demonstrate that all components of a Theory of the Navy are and should be fully consistent with the existing matrix of Soviet military thought. The structure of military science subsumes all elements of the Theory of the Navy to the more comprehensive Theory of the Armed Forces. From this it follows that all activities and missions of the Navy are evaluated in terms of their contribution to the goals of military operations as a whole. Thus the anti-SLOC mission would not exist outside the unified context of Soviet military science, "independent" appellation notwithstanding; anti-SLOC or any other missions per se are derived from and in accordance with the same principles upon which all military strategy is based.

In July, Fleet Admiral Gorshkov summarized and concluded TND. His remarks emphasized the subordination of the theory of the Navy to and its unity with military science, its interaction with the other theories of the Armed Forces, and the importance to it of the conceptual elaboration of joint operations. He also reiterated the practical importance of theoretical problems, although not so strongly as did Chernavin:

A comprehensive examination of questions of the theory of the Navy is necessary to perfect the practice of its combat employment and, consequently for improving combat readiness of the forces as well.<sup>122</sup>

The Great Patriotic War, according to Gorshkov, remains a valuable source of experience for the development of military theory and practice. However, postwar experience of war and combat training "now prevail in an improvement of the conduct of military actions, since they were conducted with the use of the modern physical base."<sup>123</sup> The outfitting of the Navy with strategic weapons has resulted in an increase in the Navy's contribution to armed warfare as a whole; however, the growth of weapons has resulted in the growth of the importance of "the unity of doctrine and military strategy in attaining the goals of armed warfare."<sup>124</sup>

Gorshkov's contribution was the final word in TND. The ideas he set forth went unchallenged--an outcome consistent with his position as CINC Navy, with Russian cultural values, and with the Marxist-Leninist precept of democratic centralism. As noted above, Gorshkov emphasized the complete unity and subordination of the theory of the Navy with military science, signalled (as had Chernavin before him) that TND was addressing issues of practical import, indicated that the lessons of the Great Patriotic War experience were giving way to more

contemporary experience, that the relative importance of the Navy had grown in the postwar years--and that, nonetheless, all aspects of naval combat continued to be determined by military science.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

In following and commenting upon the course of the anti-SLOC debate since Sea Power of the State, it became clear that analyses of the war experience continue to be a staple of Soviet Naval writing, both as an independent topic and as a prelude to discussion of modern problems; in fact, discussions of modern problems are virtually never begun without first establishing the relationship of the current problem with the lessons of the war. An author who is "progressive" about anti-SLOC operations during the war tends to be of similar mind about anti-SLOC operations in modern times. Wartime "conservatives" are often "progressives" when dealing with modern problems. It appears to be a universal tenet among Soviet Navy writers that SLOCs are at least as important, but usually more important to the conduct of modern war than was the case in the past.

Both Gorshkov and Stalbo noted during the course of the anti-SLOC debate/Theory of the Navy debate that postwar experience is supplanting that of the Great Patriotic War in the development of military theory and practice. It may be the case that in asserting that the relevance of the war experience was diminishing, either or both authors were rejecting the "conservative" position which demanded evidence for the influence of

anti-SLOC on the ground campaign (which Stalbo himself first voiced)--inasmuch as there had been no anti-SLOC campaigns since the end of the war, there was no empirical data upon which to base such analysis.

Nonetheless, the typology of the Great Patriotic War continues to shape modern historical analysis of the period; for instance, the 1940 "independent" classification of the Navy's anti-SLOC mission persisted at least into the early 1980's, (although not without rare contradiction, at least by Stalbo).

Throughout the course of the debate, Gorshkov himself was conspicuously the least consistent analyst of the historical and current ranking to be accorded to anti-SLOC action. Sea Power of the State came forth strongly for the importance of such operations then and now; thereafter, his many appearances in print presented a decidedly mixed message involving considerable variance on the status of anti-SLOC from one occasion to another. This phenomenon was probably due to Gorshkov's status as CINC of a service very much in the minority in numbers and influence at the General Staff level<sup>122</sup>. His public statements are influential in defining the public relationship of the Navy relative to the other services, hence are likely to be under intense review and pressure for subordination and strict doctrinal compliance at the most senior levels of Ground



Forces-dominated military leadership. Of all commentators on anti-SLOC Gorshkov himself, (and other senior officers like Smirnov) probably has the least "freedom of speech"--the contrast between Gorshkov's conciliatory tones and those of Morozov-Krivinsky<sup>39</sup> is an instructive example.

If military doctrine is in transition, subordinate aspects of naval art such as anti-SLOC warfare are also likely to be topics of wide variation in opinion. Thus frequent (albeit unacknowledged) "retrenchments" (especially by authoritative senior personnel) may also be necessary. According to McConnell<sup>123</sup>, in 1976 Soviet doctrine was shifting from a Limited Intercontinental Option to a Theater Nuclear Option concept vis-a-vis a major ground war in Europe. The length of the pre-nuclear period of the war, and the duration, scope and intensity of the theater nuclear phase would of course have consequences for the significance of Atlantic anti-SLOC operations; if General Staff planners proceeded from an expectation of a brief pre-nuclear phase, this would imply a downgrading of the importance of anti-SLOC operations. If there was no strong consensus of the probability of a short vs. long pre-nuclear phase, there would be "room" for varying opinions on the importance of anti-SLOC. Given the breadth of opinion between the anti-SLOC "progressives"

and "conservatives", it may be the case that there was indeed considerable uncertainty as to the duration of the pre-nuclear conventional period. Until the uncertainties of the transition period were resolved, the "correct" precedence of anti-SLOC operations within the context of shifting military doctrine was probably also in flux. This helps to explain the lack of consensus during the period 1975-1981, when the "progressive" versus "conservative" viewpoints were at their most extreme contrast.

A similar point could be made for the watershed period 1980-81; as was noted in Chapters IV and V, the anti-SLOC debate had greatly diminished in volume and frequency from 1979 to early 1981. One speculative reason for this has been mentioned: Navy "progressives" may have been unable to forge the theoretical or practical relationship between anti-SLOC and the ground campaign. Of relevance in this regard, (again according to McConnell<sup>124</sup>), in 1980-1981 Soviet military doctrine was again undergoing a transition. The new doctrine incorporated a Protracted Conventional War scenario for the European theater, wherein extended non-nuclear campaigns could be anticipated. The relevance and utility of a high-priority anti-SLOC mission would of course grow with the expected duration of the land campaign (as noted at least by both Gorshkov and

Sysoyev); thus the admissibility of publicly discussing a high-priority anti-SLOC campaign would be enhanced as well. The measure of its acceptability might be adduced from the final anti-SLOC article to be reviewed, wherein Vice Admiral Gontayev asserted through the mouths of unattributed "foreign specialists" that "Transoceanic communications...have become the most important factor that determines the course and outcome of a war in continental theaters."

The Theory of the Navy Debate brought to light an issue worth remembering in the retrospective survey of an often convoluted and tendentious discussion; the debate is far from being an inconsequential wrangle among theorists--both Admiral Chernavin and Admiral Gorshkov clearly stated that theoretical shortcomings hamper the resolution of practical problems. In this case, one of the most pressing practical problems was probably to determine how to best employ the Navy's major combat arms--submarines and aviation--in achieving the overall goals of war in the modern era.

Azzarello postulates that the three basic missions of Naval Digest are to foster unity of views, to furnish a forum for debate, and to disseminate useful information.<sup>125</sup> The anti-SLOC debate and the Theory of the Navy debate probably served all three of those missions; it elicited creative theory-building criticism

from interested experts, and conveyed the public side of the dispute to the larger professional audience. The final commentary by Gorshkov summed up results and drew conclusions.<sup>126</sup>

Gorshkov's remarks express the final public position of an animated discussion of a topic with an extensive genealogy, and probably represent a statement of doctrinal significance. Much of the Theory of the Navy debate, (certainly those contributions discussed here)<sup>127</sup> centered on the issue of the relationship between the principles which determine the theory and practice of naval art and those which determine the theory and practice of the Armed Forces as a whole. All the contributors cited above gave close attention to explicating with great emphasis the subordinate, unified character of the theory of the Navy with the principles of military science--a task which, it appears, the anti-SLOC "progressives" had previously failed to accomplish.

## END NOTES

On sources: All referenced issues of Naval Digest, unless otherwise noted, are selected translations from Morskoy Sbornik prepared for Naval Intelligence Command by the Naval Intelligence Support Center. All referenced issues of Military-Historical Journal, unless otherwise noted, are from the JPRS series "USSR Report/Military Affairs" as published by the National Technical Information Service (NTIS), Springfield, Virginia. Another important compendium of Soviet sources 1976-1980 was a study of Soviet Naval mission assignments based on examination of open literature by Ross S. Thackeray for Ketron, Inc., "The Anti-SLOC Mission: Part VII, Soviet Naval Mission Assignments(U)". This study was an extensive source of excerpts from unclassified media such as Radio Moscow, Pravda, Red Star, etc. which would otherwise have been unavailable. (The overall document classification of the Ketron study is CONFIDENTIAL due to the inclusion of excerpts from Soviet Military Thought).

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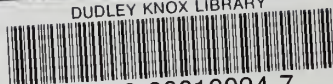
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